■ BUSINESS/B1

Surging crude, VAT push agri prices higher including rice, pork, chicken, fish

■ METRO/A19

168 Shopping Mall reopens after stall owners pay tax penalties

■ WORLD/A21

President Bush orders probe of possible manipulation of sky-high oil prices

■ NEWS/A3

Meralco, Napocor still billions apart in debt settlement

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, April 27, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 138 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Low-tech judges could be fired for 'gross ignorance'

DALI!!!!
P'WEDE PANG
HUMABOL!

By Delmar Cariño
PDI N. Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—SUPREME Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio has a suggestion regarding judges who are computer illiterate: Fire them "for gross ignorance."

LOW-TECH/A15

Mine probers find heavy metals in villagers' bodies

RESIDENTS OF SIX VILLAGES IN SORSOGON and Albay were found to have heavy metals in their bodies, allegedly due to exposure to contaminated materials from a nearby mine, according to a study submitted to the Rapu-Rapu Fact-Finding Commission.

Mercury, lead, cadmium and arsenic were detected in urine and blood samples taken from members of 25 households in the towns of Gubat,

MINE PROBERS/A11

Bro. Mike won't Cha-cha

President warned of 'silent rage' over oil

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Christine O. Avendaño and Michelle V. Remo

AN ECONOMIC ADVISER OF President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday warned her of a simmering public fury over surging oil prices, which he likened to the one that fueled the downfall of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said this "silent rage" could only be calmed by the suspension of the 12-percent expanded value-added tax (VAT) on energy products, which Ms Arroyo's economic managers had rejected as unacceptable after the proposed measure spooked financial markets, foreign investors and international credit rating agencies.

The Cabinet yesterday decided instead to lower oil import tariffs to cushion the impact of record-high world crude prices and keep the government finances on track.

"What we have looked at and decided is the tariff adjustment. As prices of crude increase, we can allow for an adjustment. That's a reduction in the tariff duty on crude," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves told reporters.

"It's a sliding scale formula. In other words, if the price of crude oil is at a certain level, we can adjust this by 1 percentage point. If it still goes up to another level, we can adjust it to 2 percentage points."

The Philippines, which imports nearly all its daily oil requirement

PRESIDENT/A10

SEEING DOUBLE AND MORE. Putting on the face of their idol, fans of ousted President Estrada hold a rally demanding his release outside St. Peter's Church on Commonwealth Avenue which has become the venue of choice of the rabidly pro-Estrada forces whenever their hero goes to court. RAFFY LERMA

Near tears, Estrada lashes out at Singson

By Volt Contreras and Nelson Flores

VISIBLY NEARING TEARS, OUSTED President Joseph Estrada yesterday let out in court what may be his most embittered statements under oath against his chief accuser, Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

He called Singson a "corrupt governor," "a publicly accused murderer," a "documented" smuggler of motorcycles, and someone who worked for his ouster because he was about to lose his own illegal gambling racket to state-sanctioned gaming.

The 69-year-old Estrada appeared for the fifth time to defend himself in his 5-year-old trial for plunder, a crime penalized by death through lethal injection but unlikely to be carried out amid the current debate against the death penalty.

Prosecutors allege Estrada amassed about P4 billion from illegal gambling payoffs, tax kickbacks and commissions stashed in secret bank accounts under an alias. He also faces a perjury charge for allegedly underreporting his assets in 1999.

Toward the midday break, Estrada's defense counsel, Jose Flaminiano, moved to wrap up the morning session by asking his client about his "feelings" concerning the charges leveled against him particularly by Singson.

"My feeling is that not even in my wildest dreams did I expect to be placed in this stand—from President to prisoner. It's so painful to be here because of lies started by one man," he said, referring to Singson.

It further hurt him, he said, to

NEAR TEARS/A15

El Shaddai mobilized vs signature campaign

By Juliet Labog-Javellana
in Manila
and Felipe V. Celino
PDI Visayas Bureau

OPPONENTS OF A SIGNATURE campaign being supported by Malacañang to pave the way for a parliamentary form of government have found an ally in Bro. Mariano "Mike" Velarde, leader of the Catholic charismatic group El Shaddai.

Velarde vowed to mobilize his followers against the signature drive aimed at changing the 1987 Constitution.

He said he had instructed members of the group not to sign the form being circulated by organizers of the "people's initiative," a mode of amending the Constitution favored by Malacañang.

El Shaddai claims at least five million members here and abroad.

"We already told our members not to sign anything that they do not understand. I was told they were approached but they did not know what they are being told to sign," Velarde said in an interview with the INQUIRER.

BRO. MIKE/A6

SC ruling put to a test in May Day rallies

By Blanche S. Rivera

MAY 1 WILL SHOW WHO'S WHO.

Leftist groups said Malacañang's respect for the Supreme Court's decision declaring the calibrated preemptive response (CPR) policy unconstitutional would be tested on Labor Day, when protesters take to the streets to demand a better living package.

Sanlakas president Wilson Fortaleza said the protest actions on Monday would be the litmus test for President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Philippine National Police.

"Is it the Supreme Court decision on CPR that will be followed, or would it be Malacañang, the PNP and the likes of Mayor (Lito) Atienza, who will have the final word?" Fortaleza asked.

The Solidarity of Union and Labor Organizations for New Government (Sulong) is hoping to bring 30,000 workers out in the streets while the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) and the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) are expecting at least 20,000 people.

The protesters will run into a 5,000-strong Task Force Manila Shield, Metro Manila Police Chief Vidal Querol said yesterday. Police also will be on full alert.

SC RULING/A6

CDN wins 4 local press awards

PDI'S SISTER publication Cebu Daily News publisher/acting editor in chief Eileen Mangubat and PDI publisher Isagani Yambot receive the awards.

THE CEBU DAILY NEWS WAS awarded the best edited daily community newspaper in the country, topping four of five categories in the 2005 Community Press Awards given by the Philippine Press Institute (PPI).

The CDN bested other finalists in a nationwide search and was adjudged Best Edited Paper, Best in Photojournalism, Best in Editorial Page and Best in Business and Economic Reporting.

A fifth category, Best Science and Environment Reporting, was won by Kapawa News of Bacolod City.

The award ceremonies were held Monday night during the 10th National Press Forum and PPI Membership meeting held at the Orchid Garden Suites in Manila.

CDN WINS/A6

Thousands of freedom parks rising

By PDI Metro Section and PDI Visayas Bureau

THOUSANDS OF FREEDOM parks will be put up across the country as local government executives promise to heed a Supreme Court ruling, but officials of two cities in Metro Manila claim their jurisdictions were too congested for such parks.

A spokesperson of Parañaque Mayor Florencio Bernabe said the city government had limited options because most of the city was occupied by subdivisions.

"Right now, Parañaque does not have a freedom park to speak of as required by the Supreme Court," Nelson Lacambra said.

The order to put up freedom parks was part of the court's ruling issued Tuesday declaring the government's "calibrated preemptive response" policy unconstitutional. The CPR allowed law enforcers to break up antigovernment rallies without permits.

All public plazas and parks shall be deemed freedom parks if the towns and cities have not declared them as such 30 days after the tribunal issued its final decision. No permits will be required

THOUSANDS/A6

PAPARAZZI'S PETS
The Miss Philippines-Earth 2006 candidates are presented to the media at Patio Victoria in Intramuros, Manila, on Wednesday. REM ZAMORA

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will continue to experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms becoming more frequent over eastern Visayas. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/04/26/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

Erap denies US espionage charge

FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA YESterday denied allegations by US federal prosecutors that he conspired with a former FBI analyst to steal classified information that could be used to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

According to documents filed this week in US District Court in Newark, New Jersey, Estrada opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson and former House Speaker Arnulfo Fuentebella might have sought information from former FBI analyst Leandro Aragoncillo to help try to overthrow Ms Arroyo.

Estrada acknowledged receiving information from Aragoncillo, but he said it was passed on to him voluntarily and amounted to nothing more than what was already reported by local newspapers.

He said he would never get involved in a plot to oust Arroyo, who, as vice president, took over from Estrada following the 2001 "people power" protest that ousted him on charges of corruption.

"I don't have that intention, whatsoever," Estrada told The Associated Press by telephone.

Estrada denied the information was classified.

"There was nothing new but US Embassy reports to Washington about our economy, peace and order, corruption, human rights violations," Estrada said. "I read them all in our newspapers every day."

Estrada said he has not been notified of any formal charges by US authorities and declined to comment further.

Lacson also denied the allegation, but Fuentebella could not be immediately reached for comment, according to the AP.

A Filipino-American, Aragoncillo is a former US Marine who worked in the offices of Vice Presidents Al Gore and Dick Cheney. While working for the FBI at Fort Monmouth, he was accused of downloading more than 100 sensitive intelligence documents. Court documents indicate he is negotiating a plea agreement.

The names of Estrada and the two legislators emerged Monday when the US attorney for Michael Ray Aquino, the only person indicted thus far, sought a judge's permission to take depositions from the three in the Philippines.

US prosecutors depict Aquino, a former high-ranking police official, as a contact between Aragoncillo and opposition politicians. He is charged with conspiracy to pass classified information and acting as an unregistered foreign agent.

If the judge permits the taking of depositions in the Philippines, they would be videotaped and could be played for a jury in the United States. Assistant US Attorney Karl Buch opposed the request. *AP with Leila B. Salaverria*

TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH!

So that the Filipino people may know the truth!

To tell you the truth, THERE HAS BEEN NO OVERPRICING OF MEGA PACIFIC'S AUTOMATED COUNTING MACHINES (ACMs)!

The procurement process always begins with a budget estimate. In the case of the ACMs, a Committee, composed of experts in information technology, finance and investment from the private sector (among whom were *Augusto Lagman* and *Maricor Akol*) as well as from non-government organizations (headed by NAMFREL through its *Chairman Jose Concepcion* and *Executive Director Telibert Laoc*) was formed during the term of former COMELEC Chairman Alredo L. Benipayo. Said Committee was tasked to conduct a thorough study in order to come up with a budget estimate. The recommended Php 1.3 billion budget became the basis of COMELEC for its automation program.

The ACMs of Mega Pacific actually cost only Php 1.248 billion - way below the budget estimate. Where is the overprice? The bid price of the losing bidder is Php 1.297 billion. Aside from being already higher than the price of Mega Pacific's ACMs, this covers only Mindanao and NCR. Based on this price, therefore, the cost for nationwide automation will be Php 3.532 billion - exceeding that of the winning bidder by more than Php 2.248 billion!

That's not all! The ACMs of Mega Pacific can detect and reject fake ballots a well as ballots that have been previously counted, unlike the counting machines of the losing bidder!

To tell you the truth, MEGA PACIFIC'S ACMs ARE LESS EXPENSIVE THAN THE COUNTING MACHINES USED IN THE ARMM IN 1996-1998!

The overall cost of the 68 counting machines used in 1996-1998 for ARMM alone was US$1.020 million. If we were to base our computation on this price (using the prevailing exchange rate at the time of the bidding for the ACMs which was US$1.00 : Php 55.00), the cost for nationwide automation will amount to Php 2.019 billion. This means that the ACMs of Mega Pacific bought by COMELEC are still much cheaper!

To tell you the truth, BY SIMPLY LOOKING AT THE TABLE BELOW, IT IS READILY APPARENT THAT COMELEC HAS ALWAYS CONSIDERED THE BEST INTEREST OF THE GOVERNMENT IN BUYING THE ACMs OF MEGA PACIFIC!

Year	1996-1998	2004	2004
Supplier of Counting Machines	AIS / ES&S	TIM (Losing Bidder) with ES &S	Mega Pacific (Winning Bidder)
Number of Counting Machines	68	2,272 (Manual-Fed, Slow Counting Machines)	1,991 Automatic Feeding Machines
Areas where the Counting Machines shall be used	ARMM Pilot - Test	Mindanao and NCR only	Nationwide
Number of Voters	1,111,201	14,700,000	40,000,000
Over-all Expenses	US$1,020,000	Php 1,297,860,560	Php 1,248,949,088
Cost per voter	Php 50.49	Php 88.29	Php 31.22
Estimated Budget if the Counting Machines are used for 40 million voters US$ 1.00 : Php 55.00)	Php 2.019 Billion	Php 3.532 Billion	Php 1.248 Billion
GOVERNMENT SAVINGS ON MEGA PACIFIC ACMs	**Php 771 Million**	**Php 2.248 Billion**	

To tell you the truth, MEGA PACIFIC'S ACMs HAVE BEEN CERTIFIED 100% ACCURATE AND RELIABLE BY THE DOST!

The Department of Science and Technology is the country's premiere expert agency on matters involving modern technologies. As mandated by law, the DOST experts tested the ACMs of Mega Pacific and certified them as 100% accurate and reliable!

To tell you the truth, MEGA PACIFIC'S ACMs HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY USED IN LARGE ELECTIONS IN SOUTH KOREA!

These ACMs are made by one of South Korea's largest corporations: SK C&C. The ACMs have, in fact, been used in local and in national elections in South Korea in 2002, with more than 20 million voters participating in each of the two elections!

To tell you the truth, THE SUPREME COURT DID NOT SAY THAT THE COMELEC WAS CORRUPT!

The Supreme Court NEVER said that the COMELEC was guilty of any anomaly! The Court actually said: that it "did not make any premature conclusion on any wrongdoing but precisely directed the Ombudsman to make that determination after observing due process." Former Chief Justice Davide himself, said: "There is no suggestion that graft and corruption attended the bidding process or that the contract price is excessive or unreasonable."

To tell you the truth, THE COMELEC HAS NOT BEEN IDLE!

The COMELEC continues to push for the modernization of the Philippine electoral process. Currently, the COMELEC has submitted to the Senate and the House of Representatives proposals for the amendment of the Modernization Law or Republic Act No. 8436 to allow the adoption of the election technology that is most appropriate to the needs of the Philippine system. In this way, the COMELEC seeks to guarantee modernized elections that are cleaner, faster, and more credible than traditional manual elections, and at far lesser cost!

Panganiban view on death penalty draws mixed reaction

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Jocelyn Uy

SENATE MINORITY LEADER AQUILINO PImentel Jr. yesterday welcomed Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban's position that death penalty is unconstitutional and expressed confidence that majority of senators would support his bill seeking the abolition of capital punishment.

But an anti-crime group in favor of death penalty said it hoped the chief justice was simply misquoted on his views of capital punishment.

The Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) said it was "extremely" shocked by Panganiban's remarks, saying that the chief justice should set an example on the virtues of prudence and statesmanship since the Supreme Court is the "last bastion" of justice for heinous crime victims.

"I believe we have the upper hand in the Senate," Pimentel said, saying he could count only three colleagues who have expressed their position against the repeal of Republic Act 7659, the Death Penalty Law which took effect in 1994.

Pimentel said that of the 23 senators, only Senators Panfilo Lacson, Luisa Ejercito Estrada and her son Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada have so far registered opposition to the repeal of the death penalty.

Pimentel said he would ask the Senate leadership to include his abolition bill among the chamber's priorities at the resumption of session on May 15.

Easter announcement

Calls for the death penalty's abolition was prompted by President Macapagal-Arroyo's Easter announcement that she was commuting the death sentences of those convicted of heinous crimes to life imprisonment. She subsequently certified a House bill for the abolition of death penalty.

Pimentel, who had been calling for Ms Arroyo's resignation, welcomed the President's moves.

Speaking in Baguio City where the SC justices were holding their summer sessions, Panganiban expressed his personal position death penalty was against the law. He said its proponents failed to show that its imposition would be a deterrent to crime.

Panganiban said it was up to Congress to repeal the law.

But VACC expressed dismay that Panganiban expressed his personal opinion on the issue, saying that coming from the chief justice, it was 'repulsive.'"

"[We] condemn the remarks made by the chief justice... How could he take upon himself to be the spokesperson of the whole Supreme Court? He may have the right to express his opinion but he should have exercised extreme caution," said VACC Founding Chair Dante Jimenez.

Jimenez also said Panganiban should have been careful in issuing such remarks since he was holding a delicate post.

DAR to review CARP exemption of Floreindo land

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM yesterday said it would review the exemption granted to the Floirendos for their 386-hectare property in Davao del Norte, which a slain peasant leader had petitioned for coverage under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

Agrarian Reform Undersecretary Narciso Nieto said the DAR would look into the assertion of farmers that the exempted Floirendo land was planted to citrus and not a livestock and bamboo area as the landowners had claimed to obtain exemption.

In an order issued in February 1993, former DAR chief Ernesto Garilao had said the 386 hectares were grazing land. His decision was final and executory, until it was questioned by the Pambansang Ugnayan ng mga Nagsasariling Lokal na Organisasyon sa Kanayunan (Unorka) last year.

Meralco, Napocor still billions apart in talks

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL POWER CORP. AND THE Manila Electric Co. remain at odds over the amount they should pay each other to settle a dispute over a 10-year power supply agreement that lapsed last Dec. 31, 2004.

In a briefing yesterday, Meralco president and chief operating officer Jesus Francisco said the two parties had already submitted a joint settlement agreement involving P14.3 billion to the Energy Regulatory Commission.

"But even without a contract, we've been getting more than 50 percent of our requirements from Napocor," he told reporters.

But Napocor president Cyril del Callar said the state power firm was still seeking some clarifications from Meralco with regard to the settlement agreement.

"The matter is pending with the ERC, and Napocor is maintaining its position that the settlement amount should be around P20 billion and not P14.3 billion. Nothing has changed," he said.

He stressed, however, that the matter was up to the ERC to settle.

In 1994, Napocor and Meralco entered into a 10-year contract for the supply of electricity (CSE) which required the latter to draw 60,092 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity from Napocor, with a minimum 3,600 megawatts (MW) starting 2001.

However, since forecasted power demand failed to fully materialize, Meralco's energy offtake fell below the required amount under the contract.

Napocor and Meralco had a third-party mediation process in early 2003 but their discussions on the validity of the supply contract bogged down.

After the mediation process, the two parties filed a joint settlement agreement with Meralco required to pay Napocor around P28 billion (at P1.51 per kWh), minus adjustments, for undrawn electricity under their 10-year supply contract.

But out of the P28 billion, Meralco will pay only P20 billion over a five-year period since the P8 billion represent adjustments that Napocor will have to pay. These adjustments include provisions for transmission delays and P8 billion for "delays in turn-over of directly connected consumers."

PCGG chided on Marcos compromise plan

THE JUDGE HEARING THE CRIMINAL cases filed against former First Lady Imelda Marcos yesterday chided the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) on its plan to forge a compromise deal with the Marcoses, saying the PCGG should not preempt the courts.

Judge Silvino Pampilo Jr. of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 26 was reacting to the statement of PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede that "there must be a way of dismissing the criminal cases [against the Marcoses]."

"That's unethical, he should not be saying that, that's sub judice," Pampilo said. "Even if they settle, the court will still be the one to decide. They (PCGG) may only compromise the civil, but not the criminal, aspect of the case."

Pampilo is handling the 32 counts of alleged dollar-salting, in particular, violations of Central Bank regulations, against Mrs. Marcos.

Abcede is instigating negotiations for a compromise deal with the Marcoses which would involve the dismissal of the cases against the Marcos family in exchange for government getting a share of the ill-gotten wealth. *Tina G. Santos*

Backed by senators, heckler is defiant

By TJ Burgonio in ***Manila***
and Marlon Ramos,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

SENATORS YESTERDAY RUSHED TO THE DEfense of a fresh college graduate threatened with criminal prosecution for heckling President Macapagal-Arroyo at a recent graduation ceremony, and rebuked Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez for unleashing the NBI on the girl.

"Embarrassing the President is not a crime," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said at a news conference.

He said Maria Theresa Pangilinan was merely airing a grievance against the President and voicing the truth when she called Ms Arroyo a "fake President."

The President "should be able to live with that" or resign, Pimentel said.

Senate President Franklin Drilon agreed, saying Pangilinan was "just a student and every Filipino has a right to express his or her sentiment."

Pangilinan caused a stir at the graduation rites of the Cavite State University in Indang last week when she stood up, unfurled a protest banner and called for Ms Arroyo's ouster as the President was delivering a speech.

This caught Ms Arroyo off-guard and prompted presidential guards to frisk the students on their way to the stage to receive their diplomas from her.

Pimentel charged that Gonzalez was really trying to intimidate the public by having the NBI investigate Pangilinan, a sentiment echoed by Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

"I must warn Secretary Gonzalez that what he is doing is ... to send a chilling effect on anyone expressing sentiments against the government," Lacson said in a statement.

Drilon said the case against Pangilinan was a "petty thing" and Gonzalez should attend to more important things.

Pangilinan herself remained defiant of Ms Arroyo and Gonzalez, describing the justice secretary's threat as attempt to "bully those who oppose and expose the President's wrong-doings."

"As I've said, what I did was a political exercise guaranteed by the Constitution," she told the INQUIRER in telephone interview. "What I did was to stand for what many Filipinos believe is the truth—that (Ms Arroyo) cheated to win the presidency."

"I am not afraid to face any investigation. I am not like Ms Arroyo who needed to use her allies in Congress to block her impeachment trial and hide the truth," she replied when asked about an NBI investigation.

She said she has received several offers of legal assistance.

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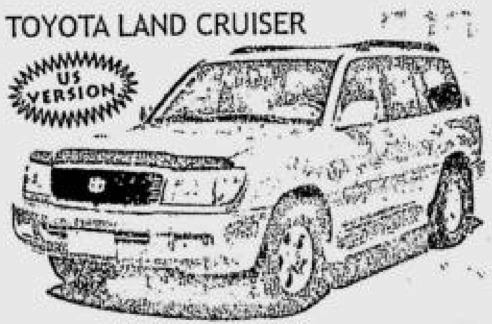

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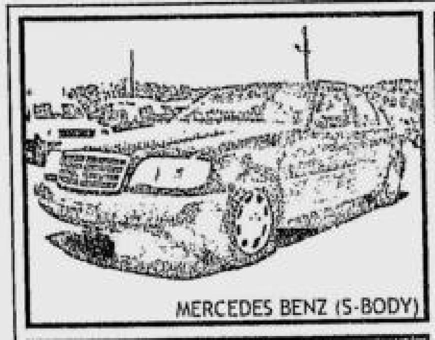
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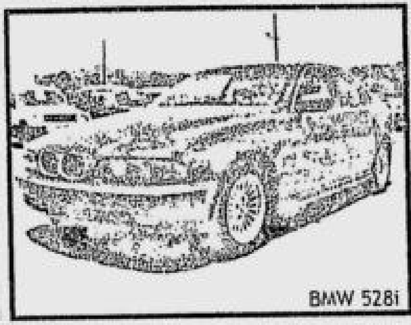
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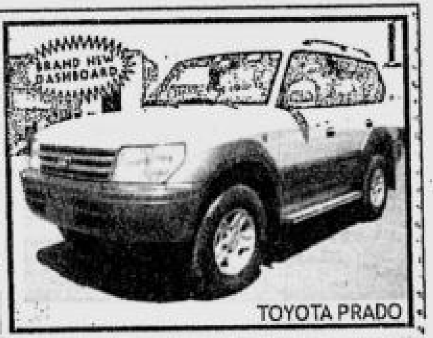

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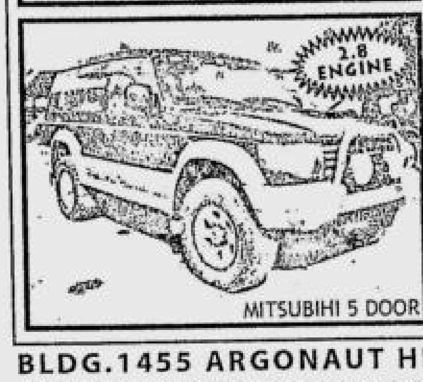

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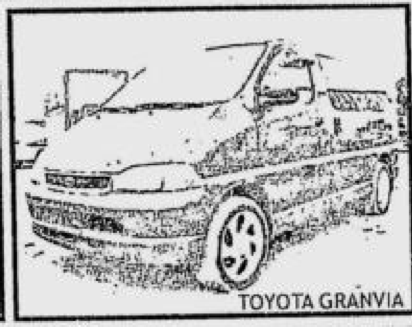
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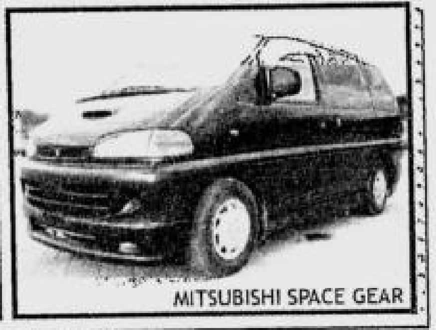
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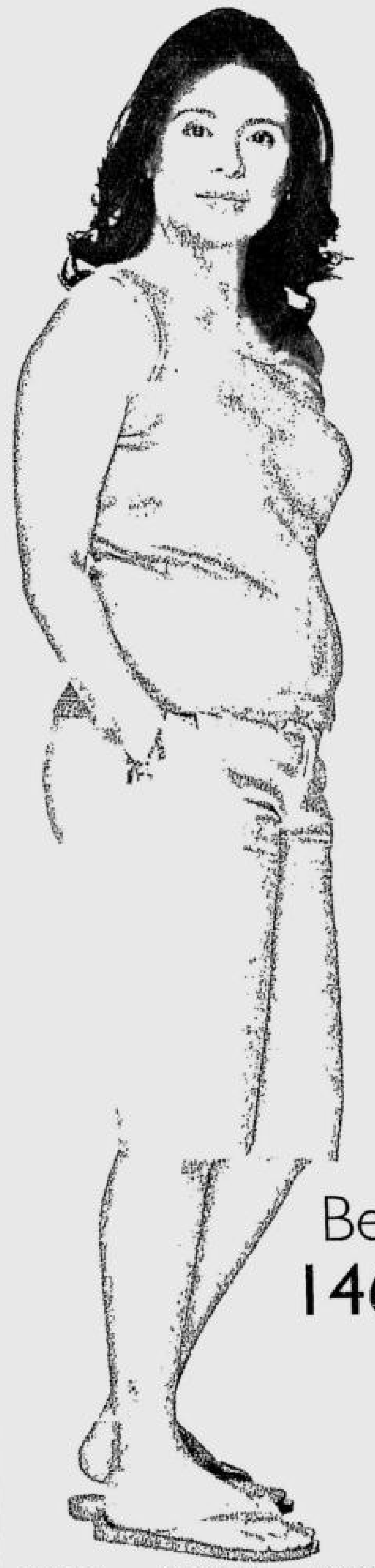
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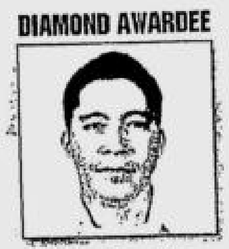
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Century Park - Adriatico

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Jun Sandoval
T.M. Kalaw - Luneta

SILVER AWARDEE

Lavinia Aza Maranan
Batangas St. - Rizal Ave.

ROOKIE AWARD

ROOKIE FSE OF THE YEAR

Tina Maryanne Nebres
San Fernando - La Union

AREA MANAGER'S LEVEL

ELITE LEADER'S AWARD

DIAMOND & GOLD AWARDEE

Dexter Aligan
Metro West 2 and 1

SILVER AWARDEE

Ces Guerrero
Metro South 2

ROOKIE AWARD

ROOKIE AM OF THE YEAR

Malou Recio
Metro North 1

EQUITABLE PCI BANK LEVEL

CHAIRMAN'S AWARD

DIAMOND AWARDEE

Dominador Francisco, Jr.
Century Park - Adriatico

GOLD AWARDEE

Antonio Tan
T.M. Kalaw - Luneta

SILVER AWARDEE

Ellie Cecilia R. Dizon
Batangas St. - Rizal Avenue

TOP DIVISION HEAD'S AWARD

DIAMOND AWARDEE

Annie Ngo
Personal Banking Division
Metro West

DIAMOND AWARDEE

Noel Dizon
Transaction Banking Division
Metro West

ROOKIE AWARD

ROOKIE BRANCH OF THE YEAR

Ma. Rosita J. Tinio
F. Tañedo - Tarlac

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Ma. Rosita Tinio
F. Tañedo - Tarlac

Wilfredo Alonzo
Reina Regente - C.M. Recto

William Lim
Tabora - M. De Santos

Pamela Ann S. Reyes
Ortigas Ave. - Greenhills

Victorina Ros
Equitable PCI Tower 1

Evangeline Borja
Sanciangco - Cabanatuan

Catherine Tan
Juan Luna - Binondo

Guillermo Serrano
Don Antonio - Commonwealth

Rosalinda Rodriguez
San Fernando - La Union

Emelie Dimalanta
Dolores - San Fernando

Edgardo Alcaraz
Scout Albano - Quezon City

Melissa Techico
Ongpin - Gandara

George Dosado
Ortigas 1 - Exchange

Shakira Yu
U.N. Avenue - J. Bocobo

Rommel Gomez
Zamora - Meycauayan

Jose Alvarez
Dian - Gil Puyat

Ralph Macaspac
Marikina - J.P. Rizal

Policarpio Carlos
Capitol - Pasig

Ma. Evelyn Comidoy
R. Alunan - Koronadal

Francis Javier Ejercito
Reposo - Makati

Jose Emilio Alcalde
Padre Faura - A. Mabini

Antonio Gatbonton
Makati Cinema Square

Emmanuel Camua
Greenhills Shopping Center

Ignacio Ego-Ogan, Jr.
Visayan Ave. - Project 6

Veronica Chan-Go
8th Ave. - Grace Park

Francene Lim
Clavel - Elcano

Josephine Cordova
Marcos - Sumulong Highway

Roberto Lim
Abanao Square Mall

German De Ocampo
Malabon - Rizal Avenue Ext.

Regina Anne Basilio
Shaw Blvd. - Stanford

Lourdes Turno
South Mandaue - Cebu

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M. De Santos - Ilaya

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Military still has options on Congress hearings

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

HAVING NOT RUN OUT OF EXCUSES, military officials continue to avoid congressional hearings despite the Supreme Court decision declaring Executive Order 464 unconstitutional.

The military yesterday said the decision is not yet final since the government has 15 days from the decision's promulgation last Thursday to appeal, so military officers can not be compelled to appear before legislative hearings.

And even if the SC ruling becomes final, a spokesman said they are ready to invoke military regulations on handling classified information to avoid appearing in public hearings.

"It's too early to tell [how the military would react to congressional summons] because the government [would] file a motion for reconsideration," said AFP Public Information Office chief Col. Tristan Kison.

"In the meantime, the judgment is not yet final and executory [so] it's not yet effective as far as the AFP is concerned. We have to wait for the expiration of the 15-day period [for appeal] and from there we will make another pronouncement," he added.

Prior to the issuance of EO 464 last Sept. 28, military officers summoned by Congress only needed to get clearance from the AFP Chief of Staff.

Malacañang preempted the appearance of military officials before a Senate inquiry on the "Hello Garci" election fraud scandal by issuing EO 464, requiring all public officials to secure President Macapagal-Arroyo's permission first before testifying in Congress.

"We'll always abide by the rule of law but we'll always take our cue from the leadership," Kison said.

He said they also have to abide by AFP Regulation G-200-013 dated Dec. 29, 1967 that sets guidelines for handling classified information.

Under the regulation, according to Kison, AFP personnel can divulge classified information only with clearance from the Chief of Staff or the Deputy Chief of Staff for intelligence, and only in an executive session if required to appear before Congress.

Matters discussed in executive sessions are not entered into the records and can not be disclosed to the public.

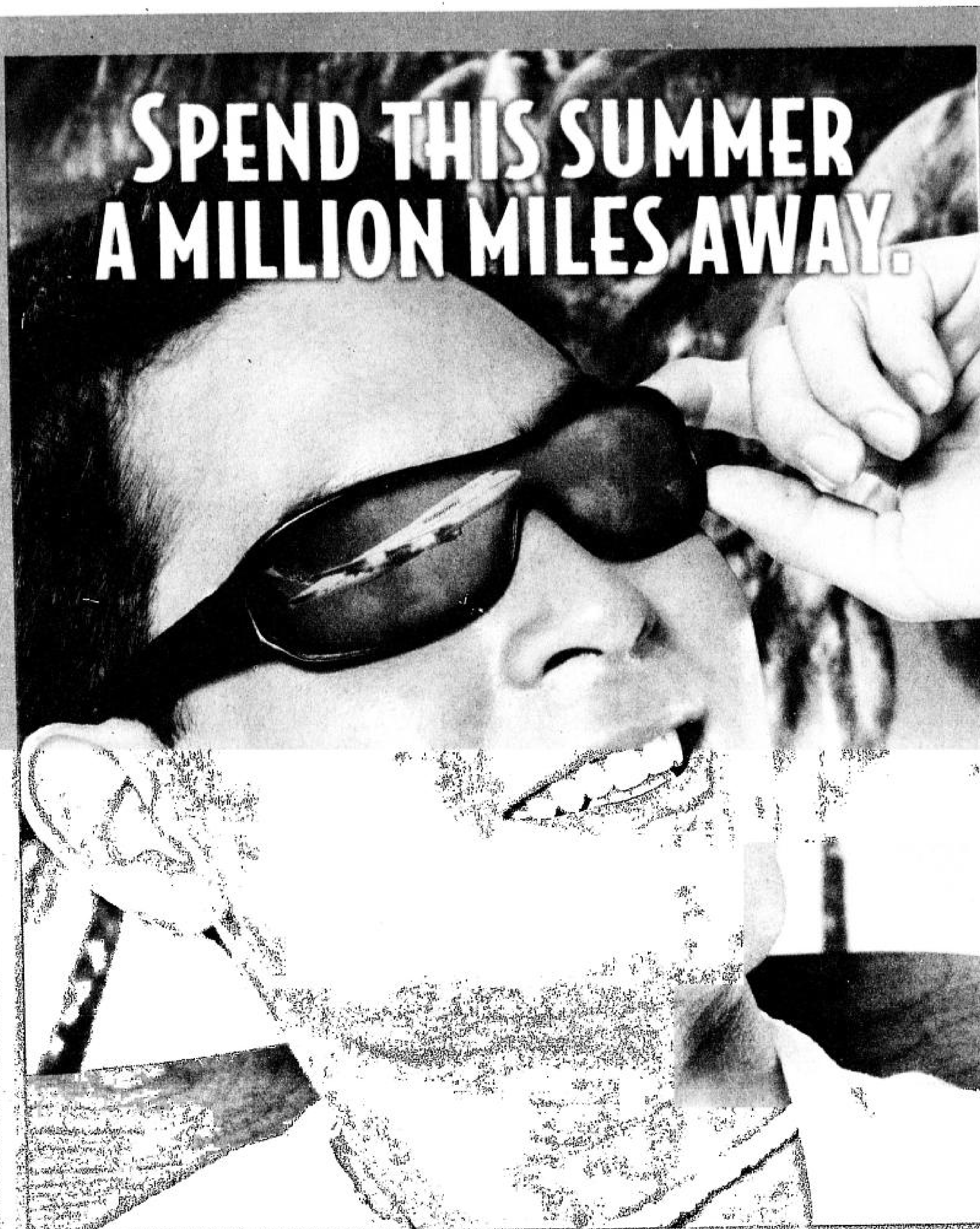
Last week, another military spokesman said they will invoke implementing rules of Republic Act 6713 or the 1989 Code of Ethics and Conduct of Public Officials of 1989 when summoned by lawmakers.

Maj. Gen. Jose Honrado cited Rule IV Section 3 of the law that lists seven exceptions to the disclosure of official information, records or documents.

According to the rules, information may be kept secret in the interest of national security; when a person is put in imminent danger; when the information falls under established privilege or other exceptions set by law; when it compromises policy decisions; when it invades personal privacy; when it interferes with criminal proceedings; or when it prematurely discloses new government regulations.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the Senate committee on national defense, has said he would resume aborted hearings on the "Hello Garci" scandal when Congress resumes sessions on May 15.

He has asked for a copy of the military's fact-finding report that cleared three generals in alleged election cheating but the military has refused to disclose the report in full, citing national security and confidentiality of the 70 witnesses.



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Bro. Mike Velarde to move vs Charter change

From page A1

Velarde echoed the line of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, which conveyed the Catholic Church's position against the people's initiative. The CBCP has questioned the authenticity of the Charter change (Cha-cha) campaign.

"People's initiative means it should come from the people, not the people being directed by people in government," Velarde said.

Velarde serves as some sort of an unofficial adviser to President Macapagal-Arroyo, whom he supported during the 2004 presidential election. The influential leader also holds dialogues with Ms Arroyo's critics, including senators and detained former President Joseph Estrada.

The form being circulated by groups like Sigaw ng Bayan contains a proposition in question form:

"Do you approve [of] the amendment [to] Articles VI and VII of the 1987 Constitution, changing the form of government from the present bicameral-presidential to a unicameral-parliamentary system and providing Articles XVIII as transitory provision for the orderly shift from one system to the other?"

Supporters of a new Constitution want Ms Arroyo to finish her term in 2010.

Cha-cha proponents resorted to the gathering of signatures after a majority of the senators opposed the move of House members to convene a constituent assembly to undertake Charter change.

The people's initiative requires the signature of at least 12 percent of the total number of registered voters nationwide and at least 3 percent of each legislative district's registered voters.

Minimum requirement

Supporters of Cha-cha claim that the signature campaign has collected enough signatures. On April 7, just two weeks into the signature campaign, Speaker Jose de Venecia had claimed that the number of signatures had reached 8.3 million, or 60 percent more than the minimum requirement.

"We will fight it out if they submit it to a plebiscite," Velarde said of the initiative to amend the 1987 Constitution.

Sigaw ng Bayan must hurdle several obstacles before its proposition could be presented to the people in a plebiscite.

The Supreme Court must revisit first its 1997 ruling on the people's initiative. In Santiago v Comelec, the high court said Republic Act No. 6735, or the Initiative and Referendum Act, was inadequate to cover the system of initiative on amendments to the Constitution.

The ruling stopped Pirma (People's Initiative for Reform, Modernization and Action) from pursuing its signature campaign to amend the Constitution to allow then President Fidel V. Ramos to run for reelection.

A party-list group has already asked the Supreme Court to rule whether the so-called Cha-cha train of Malacañang could proceed.

Before a plebiscite can be called, the Commission on Elections must also verify the signatures. A Comelec insider had claimed that some of the signatures gathered for the people's initiative were bogus.

Stop verification

In Roxas City, a regional trial court has ordered the Comelec in Capiz to temporarily stop the verification of the signatures.

Judge Edward Contreras of RTC Branch 17 issued a 20-day temporary retraining order on Tuesday, directing the poll body "to cease and desist immediately from taking cognizance of verification of signatures of the supposed registered voters presented by any people's organization."

The order stemmed from the petition for prohibition filed by former Roxas Councilor Ray Antonio "Bingo" Altavas to stop Comelec officials from verifying the signatures gathered by Sigaw ng Bayan.

In his decision, Contreras said the verification process was an exercise in "futility" and was "contemptuous" because it ran counter to the Supreme Court ruling of March 19, 1997 (Santiago v Comelec).

Contreras also pointed out the absence of a Comelec resolution that directly ordered the municipal election officers to specifically take cognizance of the request for verification and certification of the voters' signatures.

The judge also said there was no law justifying the respondents' diversion of public funds and government resources for such an activity.

The Comelec in Capiz had issued a certification that 22,372 signatures gathered for the people's initiative in the second district had been verified to be true. The number represented 12.94 percent of the 172,945 registered voters in the second district.

Opponents of Cha-cha also claim that the signature campaign was illegal, saying a people's initiative is only for making specific, not wholesale, changes to the Constitution.

Interim parliament

Should the people approve the proposition in a plebiscite, an interim parliament will be convened. It will be composed of the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The interim parliament will then make wholesale amendments to the Constitution, Rep. Constantino Jaraula, chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, earlier said.

In Jaraula's timetable, the interim parliament is to be convened in July.

Velarde also opposed moves by Cha-cha advocates to cancel the 2007 elections and install an "interim parliament" next year.

He said the election of 12 senators, all members of the House and local officials scheduled for 2007 should push through to serve as a referendum on the presidency of Ms Arroyo.

Results of the mid-term election would resolve the question on Ms Arroyo's legitimacy, he said.

Election next year

"Now considering the present questions that are haunting us, I think it is best to let the people decide the issue in the 2007 elections, for after all it is the voting population which has the final say on political issues like the question of (Ms Arroyo's) legitimacy or whether she should or should not continue to serve. These are political questions which cannot be solved by demands or calls for extra-constitutional recourse," Velarde told the INQUIRER.

"I am really personally against that initiative because in the first place the Supreme Court has already decreed that unless and after an enabling law is passed, people's initiative should not be entertained in the Comelec," Velarde said.

"And I also believe that such a very important document should be thoroughly discussed in public so that everybody is well informed before we venture further and adopt Charter change," he added.

Comelec's credibility

Besides, Velarde said any plebiscite at this time would produce questionable results because of the Comelec's lack of credibility.

"We should first fix the electoral process before bringing to the public any electoral exercise so that the result will be acceptable to the people," he said.

Velarde said the proposal also removes the right of the people to vote for their leader.

"And basically people would want to vote for their national leaders, but this proposed parliament in the people's initiative will delegate that power unto themselves," he said. "They will elect the President, who will be reduced to a figurehead."

Velarde said he was in favor of specific constitutional amendments but not the wholesale revision of the Charter.

Ms Arroyo's term

He is also in favor of a French-type parliamentary system, which retains a strong President, to "put the brakes on the parliament in case" it goes awry.

Velarde, who earlier tried to broker a Cha-cha formula that would see the President eventually stepping down for the transition to a parliamentary system, now believes that Ms Arroyo should finish her term up to 2010.

"That is her desire and her mandate. But that is a matter that Congress, including the Senate, and Malacañang should really thresh out among themselves as to what is really good (for the country)," he said.

Velarde said Ms Arroyo could not be forced to resign next year.

"That is her mandate, you cannot cut it without her consent. The only problem is what some people are saying that there might be some other factors which may intervene and is not good for everybody," he said.

SC ruling put to a test in May Day rallies

From page A1

"As early as now, we are encouraging all groups with intentions to hold protest rallies on May 1 to file their applications to the (mayors) in order that preparations, advisories and coordinations can be made," said Querol.

Tuesday's court decision by a vote of 13-0 stressed that while free speech and freedom of assembly were guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, "the right, while sacrosanct, is not absolute."

"Let it not be said that just because the term (CPR) was deemed unconstitutional, it doesn't mean that authorities are prevented from effectively addressing any disorderly conduct," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said. "The police and authorities know and are prepared on what to do."

Protesters still need permit

"I am puzzled why they are rejoicing, because the Supreme Court upheld (Batas Pambansa Bilang) ... 880," said Solicitor General Eduardo Nachura, referring to the measure passed during the martial law regime of Ferdinand Marcos.

"Those who stage rallies still need to secure a permit," Nachura said over radio dzBB.

The Marcos edict called on protesters to seek rally permits and police to exercise "maximum tolerance," he said.

The CPR, purportedly based on BP 880, was issued in September last year after the President's opponents failed in a bid to impeach her and vowed to press their campaign in the streets to force her to step aside over allegations she rigged the 2004 presidential election. Ms Arroyo has denied she manipulated the vote.

Not carte blanche

Turnout in the rallies had been small, compared to the "people power" movements in 1986 and 2001.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the Supreme Court ruling was "not a carte blanche for fomenting anarchy and destabilization."

"We must warn those who intend to overthrow the government not to test the mettle of the authorities, who will move forcefully in the case of a clear and present danger to the republic," said Bunye.

Added Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez: "If I will read this decision as I have scanned it, it's not adverse to the government ... There's a big fuss made out of the fact that the CPR was declared unconstitutional. As if you cannot anymore coin a term because it's not in the book."

The Commission on Human Rights asked the PNP not to use force against the protesters.

Human Rights Commissioner Wilhelm Soriano said the police, especially those in the crowd management dispersal group, should follow strictly its PNP Operations Manual as its "Bible."

Protect the people

"What the police should do is to take these tips to heart to avert any untoward incident ... As state actors, the CHR wants the police to do its duty, that is to protect the people," Soriano said.

Senate President Franklin Drilon added his voice to those who had welcomed the high court's decision.

"The Filipino people are again assured that the present Supreme Court will stand up at all times as their champion of civil and political liberties, particularly the rights to free speech and to peaceful assembly, as guaranteed by the Constitution," Drilon said in a statement.

Double whammy

Drilon said the Supreme Court dealt a "double whammy against the dictatorial actions of this administration."

"It is now indisputable that the Arroyo administration has violently suppressed the rights of the Filipino people to free speech and to assemble for redress of grievances by forcibly breaking up rallies, resulting in physical injuries to law-abiding citizens who are only exerting their rights, and by pressuring local officials to deny permits to rally," he said.

Drilon called on Malacañang to abide by the high court decisions on the CPR and Executive Order No. 464, which contained the gag rule on administration officials. It was struck down by the high tribunal as well last week in a 14-0 vote.

Drilon said he expected the Supreme Court to also rule against Presidential Proclamation No. 1017, which declared a weeklong state of national emergency during an alleged attempt to unseat her in February.

Strike 3

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said a "third strike" against Ms Arroyo would spell the end of her rule. He said the two Supreme Court decisions brought home the message that the President could not trample on the fundamental rights of the people.

Pimentel said Malacañang should comply with the court ruling on the CPR, noting the expected big Labor Day protests on Monday.

Pimentel warned the government against breaking up demonstrations. "The government should not do anything to break them up otherwise there will be more protests."

Opposition Sen. Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada called on the people to "continue the protest against the Arroyo administration."

"The double black eye that Mrs. Arroyo suffered from the Supreme Court should be a wake-up call for her that the orders that she had issued are all illegal and curtail the rights of the people," Estrada said.

Ruling will be respected

Vice President Noli de Castro said Malacañang's setbacks in the high tribunal on the CPR and EO 464 proved that democracy was alive.

"We will respect the ruling of the Supreme Court and be guided accordingly. The true winner here is the Filipino people as their constitutional rights to peaceably assemble and to seek redress of grievances are upheld," he said.

Workers belonging to the moderate Trade Union Congress of the Philippines hailed the court's CPR ruling.

TUCP secretary general Ernesto Herrera said the ruling effectively reinforced not just the Bill of Rights, but also Section 3, Article 13 of the Constitution, which "guarantees the rights of all workers to self-organization and to engage in peaceful concerted activities, including the hallowed right to strike."

Rights of labor upheld

"That the tribunal's judgment was unanimous underscores the sanctity of the right of labor and the people to peaceably assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances," he pointed out.

However, CPR or no CPR, the workers' right to strike, picket or rally has been intact and respected, according to Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas.

"Since the CPR was implemented, I don't think you have seen any indications that the workers' right to strike in any way has been impaired or minimized," she told reporters. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Jocelyn R. Uy, Christine O. Avendaño, Michael Lim Ubac, Luige A. del Puerto, Leila B. Salaverria, Edson C. Tandoc Jr., Philip C. Tubeza, Jerome Aning, Jerald Uy and AFP*

Thousands . . .

From page A1

to hold assemblies in these parks, according to the Supreme Court.

Like Parañaque, Las Piñas City has scarce space for a freedom park because the city is occupied mostly by subdivisions.

"What we have are parks inside the subdivisions. But those are not for public use," Jimmy Castillano, city public information head, said.

The League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) said it would implement the high court's order for the establishment of freedom park or plaza in all cities and towns in the country.

But Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas, LCP president, said his group would wait for the order of the Supreme Court to be final because the government might still file a motion for reconsideration.

Cultural Center

In Pasay City, Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad said the local government might establish a freedom park on a patch of land at the Cultural Center of the Philippines on Roxas Boulevard or at the Reclamation Area.

In contrast, Taguig City has two freedom parks—the Osano Park in Barangay Upper Bicutan and the Plaza Bonifacio in Barangay Ligid Tipas.

Muntinlupa City Mayor Jaime Fresnedi said the Liwasang Bonifacio in Barangay Alabang had been a venue for protest actions ever since.

In a previous interview, Fresnedi said the city council had suggested a space near the New Bilibid Prisons or somewhere in Barangay Tunasan for a freedom park.

In Quezon City, Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. directed the City Parks Development Administration to identify possible areas to be designated as "freedom parks."

Belmonte asked city parks chief Zaldy de la Rosa to recommend which parks to designate as a regular venue of protests.

Quezon Memorial Circle

De la Rosa said he had come up with an initial list of possible freedom parks, including the Quezon Memorial Circle, the Bernardo Park in Barangay Pinagkaisahan, and Roces Circle on Roces Avenue.

The city has no freedom park.

Quezon City is a regular venue of demonstrations, with militant groups favoring such areas as Mabuhay Rotunda and the People Power Monument on Edsa. But De la Rosa said these places would likely not be considered because the protest actions there had been known to cause huge traffic jams.

Makati

Makati City is also starting a study to identify a viable freedom park within the opposition bailiwick.

The city government has begun consultations with stakeholders in the Makati Central Business District (CBD) for the possible declaration of the Ninoy Aquino Monument as one of the freedom parks.

A favorite venue of anti-Arroyo rallies, the monument on Paseo de Roxas and Ayala Avenue sits on private land owned by Ayala Land Inc.

"It is under study because, as you know, the Supreme Court decision carries a note of permanence and, since the monument is on private property, we have to look at the legal aspect of that," said Lito Anzures, spokesperson of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay.

Other spaces being considered freedom parks are the façade of the Makati Central Fire Station on Ayala Avenue Extension and Malugay Street, a frequent convergence area of protesting groups; the stretch of South Avenue; and the section of JP Rizal Extension in front of the Makati Park and Garden and the University of Makati.

Manila

Manila has a number of freedom parks, which protesters can use to freely express themselves, according to Mayor Lito Atienza. "As far as Manila is concerned, we always implement maximum tolerance. We merely calibrate our reactions," he said.

The city's freedom parks include Luneta, Liwasang Bonifacio in Lawton, Plaza Miranda in Quiapo, Bonifacio Shrine near City Hall and Plaza Moriones in Tondo.

Most of the anti-Arroyo rallies are held in Manila, particularly on Chino Roces Bridge (formerly Mendiola), which is the intersection of the main road leading to Malacañang and the site of countless antigovernment protests broken up by police, especially during the Marcos dictatorship.

Caloocan City Mayor Enrico Echiverri said he would designate not only one but two freedom parks. He had assigned a park called the Glorietta Park in Tala in the first district and the C-3 Road in La Loma District near the North Cemetery.

Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco noted that even before the order to create freedom parks was issued, the municipal government had already allotted the area for the use of protesters.

Plaza Rodriguez on F. Sevilla Street near the Malabon City Hall was chosen by Mayor Canuto Oreta for its accessibility and size, according to the city's legal officer lawyer Robert Lim.

In Valenzuela, the lone public plaza in the city's old town center would be declared a freedom park. *Jocelyn R. Uy, DJ Yap, Tina G. Santos, Tarra V. Quismundo and Nancy Carvajal in Metro Manila; and Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

CDN wins 4 local press awards

From page A1

"You bear the weight of a great legacy," said Sheila Coronel, executive director of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, who was the guest speaker.

"You are the keepers of the written world. You keep the habit of reading alive."

The CDN previously won the PPI's best-edited award for daily community papers in 2001 and 2003.

Other winners

Other 2005 winners:

CDN publisher and acting editor in chief Eileen G. Mangubat received the trophies which were handed out by PPI executive director Jose Pavia and Coronel.

Weekly Newspapers—Mabuhay (Bulacan), Best in Photojournalism; Baguio Midland Courier (Baguio City), Best in Business and Economic Reporting; Bandillo ng Palawan Puerto Princesa City), Best in Science and Environmental Reporting; Sunday Punch (Dagupan City), Best Editorial Page; and Mindanao Bulletin (General Santos City), Best Edited Paper.

The CDN won in all the four categories it was nominated for.

A five-person board of judges headed by Ronaldo Romero, editor in chief of Business World, cited the paper for the "daily efforts of its editors to consistently present the news in the most understandable manner, enhanced by well-thought out headlines and choices of photos."

In giving the Best in Photojournalism Award, the judges cited the CDN "for its truthful and accurate storytelling of the news through technically and aesthetically outstanding photos, providing readers with a visual encounter with significant events and personalities in the news."

'Growing maturity'

For the category of Best Editorial Page, the judges said the CDN was a "must-read for people who still do not know how far the community press has advanced for the years."

"Its opinion/editorial page demonstrate the growing maturity of community papers—providing commentary on local issues without being too parochial ... The paper also deserves commendation for the solid editing that makes it a whole lot better grammatically than some Metro-based publications."

Launched in 1996, the Annual Community Press Awards is the first and only awards program of its kind in the country. Organized by the PPI, in cooperation with the Association of Community Educators Foundation, it aims to raise the standards for responsible journalism in the countryside.

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Second Regular Session)

SENATE

P. S. Res. No. 478

Introduced by DRILON, SERGE OSMEÑA, GORDON, MAR ROXAS, PANGILINAN,
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LUISA "LOI" P. EJERCITO ESTRADA, LIM, ENRILE, LACSON, M. A. MADRIGAL,
RAMON "BONG" REVILLA JR., BIAZON, ARROYO, MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO,
MANNY VILLAR, MAGSAYSAY JR. AND RECTO

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN TO INTRODUCE CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION THROUGH BARANGAY ASSEMBLIES INITIATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS ILLEGAL

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2006, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) issued Memorandum Circular No. 2006-25 enjoining all Punong Barangays to conduct Barangay Assemblies on March 25, 2006 to tackle issues on health, agriculture, education, and "current issues affecting the country";

WHEREAS, newspaper reports disclose that the Barangay Assemblies which commenced on March 25, 2006 were used as venues for a signature campaign to amend the Constitution through a people's initiative;

WHEREAS, Article XVII, Section 2 of the Constitution provides that amendments to the Constitution may be "directly proposed by the people through initiative upon a petition of at least twelve per centum of the total number of registered voters, of which every legislative district must be represented by at least three per centum of the registered voters therein" and that the Congress shall provide for the implementation of the exercise of the right of initiative;

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court in *Defensor-Santiago vs. Commission on Elections* (270 SCRA 106, March 19, 1997 and Resolution in GR No. 127325, June 10, 1997) ruled that R.A. No. 6735, the law regulating the people's initiative, "was inadequate to cover the system of initiative on amendments to the Constitution, and (to have) failed to provide sufficient standard for subordinate legislation";

WHEREAS, in the same case, the Supreme Court also ruled that the Commission on Elections is "permanently enjoined from entertaining or taking cognizance of any petition for initiative on amendments on the Constitution until a sufficient law shall have been validly enacted to provide for the implementation of the system";

WHEREAS, under the Constitution, the exercise of the right of initiative granted to the people is limited to the right to propose amendments and not revision of the Constitution;

WHEREAS, the proposed change in the form of government from bicameral-presidential to unicameral-parliamentary, entails a revision of the Constitution which cannot be done through a people's initiative;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Senate to express its sense that the signature campaign to introduce changes to the Constitution through barangay assemblies initiated by the Department of Interior and Local Government is illegal.

Adopted,

FRANKLIN M. DRILON

Richard J. Gordon

M.A. Madrigal

Nene Pimentel

To uphold 'stare decisis' doctrine!
Miriam Defensor Santiago

Pia S. Cayetano

Luisa P. Ejercito Estrada

SAUDI SLAYS

Info of DFA, Saudi embassy don't tally

By Nikko Dizon

THE DETAILS APPARENTLY DO NOT MATCH.

The Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia yesterday said that 30 Filipinos have been arrested for the killing and mutilation of three fellow Filipinos in Jeddah.

But a Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) official said there were only seven suspects and two of whom had actually confessed to the police of committing the crime.

The embassy statement also said that the Jeddah police had already "closed the file" on the case following the Filipinos' arrest.

The DFA official, however, said that the police would not close the case until the victims have been positively identified.

The official, who requested anonymity as he was not authorized to disclose information, said that the DFA had also received a copy of the embassy statement signed by Ambassador Mohammed Ameen Wali last Tuesday.

The statement was faxed to the INQUIRER yesterday.

"The DFA information does not tally with the information of the Saudi Embassy. I really could not explain why but the DFA gets its information directly from our Jeddah consulate, which in turn obtains the details from the Jeddah police," the DFA official said.

The INQUIRER tried to clarify with the Saudi embassy its statement with a list of questions sent to Wali but the envoy had yet to respond as of press time.

But the Saudi embassy and the DFA at least appeared to agree on one detail: that a certain "Reno," who is among the three Filipinos missing, ran an underground lottery game.

"Our embassy has confirmed that this Reno was one of the operators," the official said.

The embassy statement described "Reno" to be a "well-known operator of illegal gambling and a leader of the criminals in committing the heinous crime."

While the DNA tests have yet to be performed to establish the identities of the victims, the DFA official said it is being assumed that the three missing men were the victims in the macabre killing.

According to the official, the killers apparently made sure that it would be difficult to identify the victims.

"We received information that the fingers of one of the hands recovered had also been chopped off, presumably to get rid of the victim's prints," the official said.

The DFA had already been furnished a profile of the three assumed victims.

"Reno" and another man were from Pampanga while the other man hailed from Batangas.

Labor divided on pay hike bid

By Jerome Aning

AS LABOR DAY APPROACHES, two major workers' groups are bickering over whose is the better strategy to increase wages.

"A waste of time" was how the left-leaning Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) described the moderate Trade Union Congress of the Philippines' plan to ask the regional wage boards for a P70 across-the-board daily wage hike.

That is "like waiting for the crow to turn white," KMU chair Elmer Labog said in a telephone interview, adding that the boards were created in 1989 precisely to prevent any across-the-board wage increases.

"The best thing to do right now is to unite behind the P125 legislated... wage increase in the midst of rising prices of basic commodities induced by the Reformed Value Added Tax and rising cost of fuel oil," he said in an earlier statement.

TUCP spokesman Alex Aguilar bristled at Labog's comments and branded the P125-legislated wake hike proposal as "a mere propaganda line" advanced by KMU and its affiliate party-list groups.

"History will show that the petitions filed by TUCP have all been given due course," Aguilar said in a separate interview. "We did get increases, even if they were small—and we condemned the boards for it—but they are better than nothing, better than KMU's propaganda line."

He added: "KMU has nothing to show the workers ... in fact, the P125-hike was proposed way back in 1995 and nothing so far has come out of it."

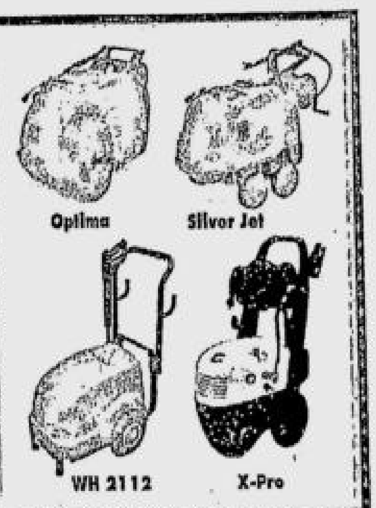
Last year, TUCP asked for a P75-across-the-board wage increase. The increases granted by the boards ranged from P5 to P25.

Minimum daily wages vary widely across the country. Metro Manila has the highest at P325, followed by Calabarzon at P265 and Central Luzon, P263.50. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao has the lowest.

Labog said wages have to be increased because the daily cost of living was now estimated at P675 for a family of six in Metro Manila.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said she was not aware of any plan by Malacañang to announce a wage increase on May 1.

She did say, however, that the Palace would announce some sort of package or policies to address workers' concerns, but she did not want to preempt the President. *With Jerald Uy*



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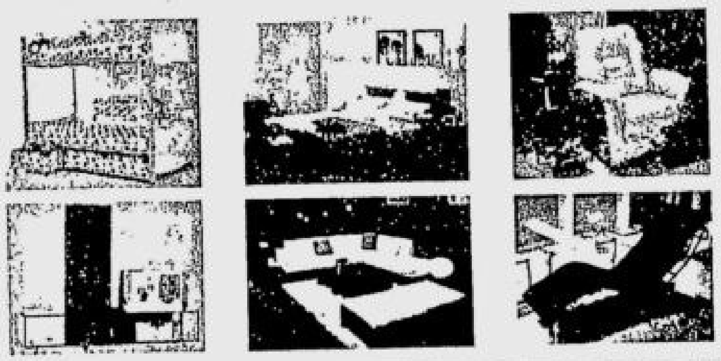

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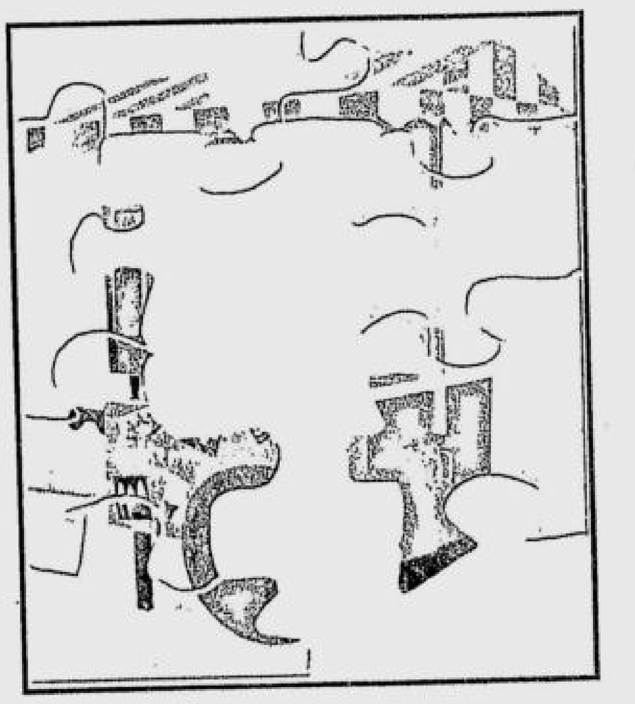

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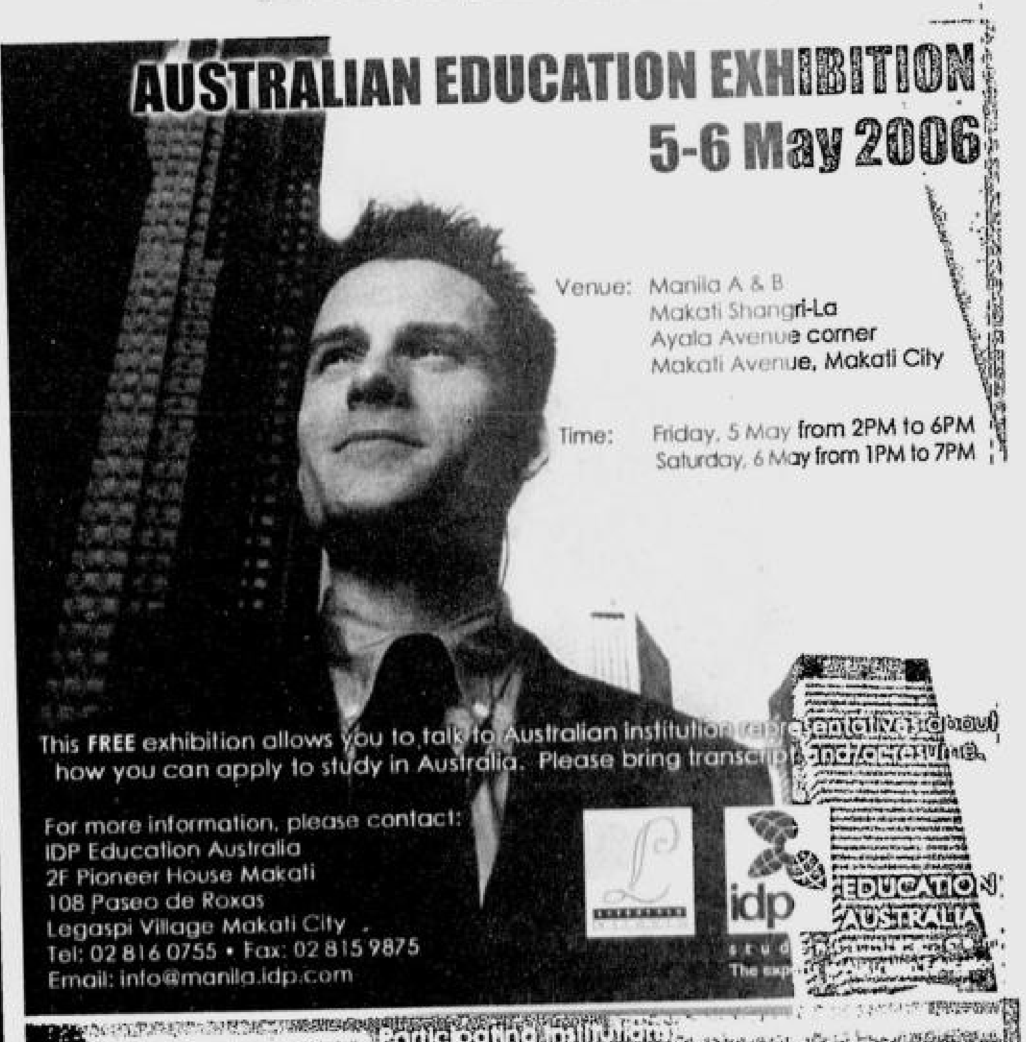

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President . . .

From page A1

of 330,000 barrels, currently has an import tariff of 3 percent on oil products.

'Too modest'

Even so, Salceda said a lower tariff on oil products, which would reduce fuel prices by as much P1.20 per liter, was "too modest" to make an impact on consumers who, according to him, have been burdened by higher taxes the past three years.

"Higher oil prices alone have punched a P134-billion hole in the pockets of working families on top of the P80 billion in the VAT, P45 billion in power tariff adjustments, and P16 billion in sin taxes. That should make for an agitated, aggravated yet still acquiescent public," Salceda said.

"This is the silent rage that pulled down Marcos just 14 months after global oil hit its all-time peak of $88 per barrel in 1984."

Marcos was ousted in the Edsa "people power" uprising in February 1986 after the public grew weary of dictatorial rule, human rights abuses and failed economic policies.

"The policy imperative is to afford relief after the unabated pain since there is some fiscal space and postponable big ticket items," Salceda said, referring to the better-than-expected fiscal picture in the first quarter.

"The key is to stick to the P125-billion deficit target and the relief is time bound. A suspension (of the VAT) till December 2006 is a reasonable and compelling proposition even to the most hawkish creditor," he added.

Salceda said the VAT suspension may also be lifted if world crude prices stabilized at $65 per barrel.

He said the government could afford to suspend the VAT on oil products because of the P27 billion in government savings in 2005 and an additional P7.7 billion in savings in the first quarter of 2006.

Better alternative

Finance officials, however, said a sliding scale formula in lowering the oil tariff was a better alternative to suspending the VAT on energy products.

Explaining the formula to reporters, Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said the government could reduce the oil tariff to 2 percent if the Dubai crude price hits $61 a barrel and to 1 percent if the oil price reaches $66 a barrel.

The government could also cut the tariff to zero if Dubai crude surges to $72 a barrel, he added.

Beltran said the Department of Energy was already drafting the executive order.

Even so, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the government was still projecting an average 2006 price of $62 per barrel for Dubai crude, the benchmark used by local refiners.

Dubai crude is currently trading at around $67.21 a barrel but has averaged around $59 a barrel so far this year, about 20 percent higher than the average price of $49.31 a barrel in 2005.

US crude futures, on the other hand, are trading at around $73.12 a barrel after tumbling from a high of $75.35 a barrel on Monday.

Why Cabinet rejected VAT lifting

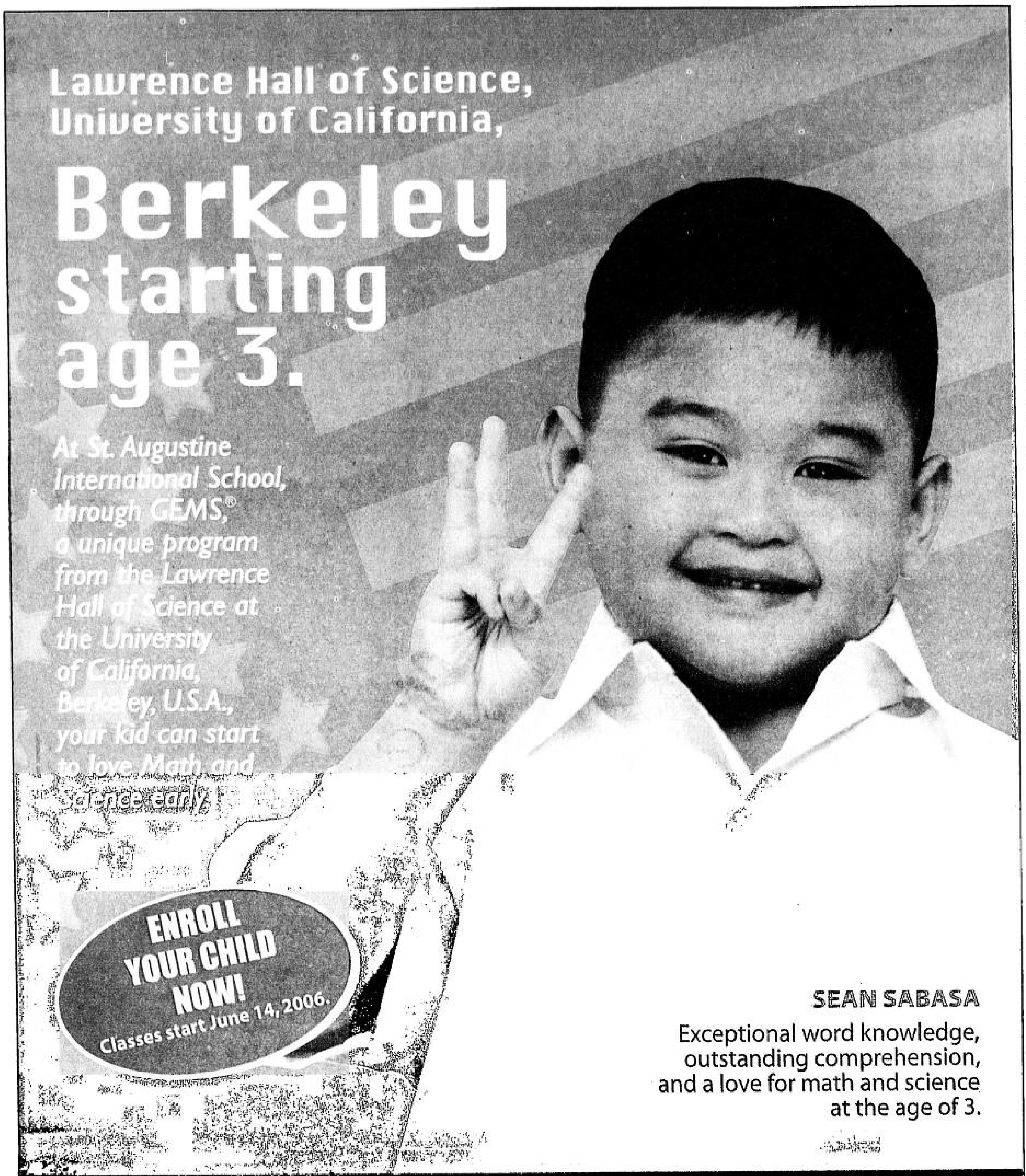
Explaining the Cabinet's rejection of the proposal to suspend the VAT on oil products, Teves underscored the need for the government to hit its fiscal targets. "Clearly, the VAT collection from petroleum products contributes a lot to the government's revenue-generation efforts," he said in a statement.

The VAT is the centerpiece of Ms Arroyo's plan to raise revenues and cut the country's $76-billion debt, and any meddling is likely to spark an outcry among investors, creditors and ratings agencies.

In the first four months since the new VAT law came into force, actual collections of VAT on oil reached P11.9 billion, or 77 percent of the P15.5 billion in gross revenues.

After expanding the coverage of the VAT to include oil, power and other previously exempt sectors in November last year and raising the VAT rate by 2 percentage points to 12 percent in February this year, the government has been more confident of meeting its target of a balanced budget by 2008.

Financial markets have been pricing in a possible upgrade in the country's credit ratings, given steady progress in the fiscal reforms. *With reports from Reuters and AFP*



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Mine probers find heavy metals in villagers' bodies

From page A1

Prieto-Diaz, Barcelona, Bacon and Bulusan in Sorsogon, and one barangay in Legazpi City.

The study was done by a team led by Nelia Cortes-Maramba, professor emeritus at the University of the Philippines Manila's Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, upon the request of the Sorsogon provincial government.

"The results showed high chemical content in the participants' bodies and food sources … These chemicals are harmful, especially lead, which may affect a person's IQ (intelligence quotient) baseline," Maramba told the commission during a hearing in Quezon City on Tuesday.

Most of those who have lead and arsenic in their urine live close to where the mine spills happened, Maramba said.

Direct link?

Another team member, however, did not conclude a direct link between the heavy metal content in the residents' bodies and mining operations of the Australian-owned Lafayette Philippines on Rapu-Rapu Island off the eastern coast of Albay.

"That's why there's the fact-finding commission. They should be the ones to see the link if there is any," Irma Macalinao of the UP College of Medicine told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

The medical team was unable to determine the amount of arsenic, mercury, lead and cadmium in the urine and blood samples because these were below the detection limits of the machines.

"The danger is that it doesn't give you an assurance that the person is not exposed to heavy metals," Macalinao said.

Skin disorders

The team also debunked claims by antimining groups and some residents that they were suffering from skin disorders as a result of exposure to Lafayette's mining operations. "It is just the skin's reaction to sand," Maramba said.

The study was done on Feb. 20-22.

In a statement, Lafayette said the study was preliminary and not conclusive.

"Successive studies are needed to find the source of these metals. This study can't make any linkage to any source, much less Lafayette which does not use mercury and has not been operating for almost six months now," the company said.

The participants, who should have stayed in the communities for at least three years, answered a standardized questionnaire and underwent medical examination.

Those who were exposed to lead emissions, like heavy smokers, gas station workers, welders and painters, were excluded from the tests.

"We did not check for the cyanide content because when we did the study, three months had already passed [since the reported spillage] and cyanide stays in the body for only two days at the longest—unless the content is very high," Maramba said. *Alda Franz C. Quodala*

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2006
ISSN 0116-2642
INQUIRER
Vol. 21 No. 138
Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net

OPINION

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Rocos Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Circulation Customer Service Hotline 896-6000

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Dumb and dumber

EDITORIAL

THE OIL SHOCK HAS MADE THE ARROYO administration look like a punch-drunk and groggy fighter groping desperately for anything that would keep him on his feet. With international crude oil prices shooting up to more than $75 a barrel and domestic prices of oil products at all-time highs, administration officials announced Monday that the government was mulling the suspension of the 12-percent value-added tax on such products. But when the markets reacted negatively the next day, with the peso sinking to a two-month low against the dollar and stock prices falling 0.8 percent, Malacañang hurriedly shelved the proposal. Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the administration would lift the VAT only as a last resort.

The suspension of the VAT as well as the 3-percent tariff on oil imports would cut the pump prices of oil products by P3 per liter, according to Albay Rep. Joey Salceda. When it was announced by Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor, it immediately got bipartisan support from the House of Representatives, with 146 of its 236 members signing a resolution endorsing it.

Department of Finance officials protested, but only from the safety of anonymity. Only Sen. Ralph Recto was willing to come out in the open with his advice for the administration to proceed with caution. Aside from its impact on the budget, he said, the administration "must assess what a VAT retraction would do to the country's deficit reduction plan, and to our interest and foreign exchange rates. Our creditors will hyperventilate and panic and we should be ready to calm them."

The suspension of the VAT will obviously cost the government dearly. Finance officials estimated the annual revenue losses resulting from it at P29 billion. But that is assuming that crude oil prices would average $62 per barrel. If crude prices go higher, as they have recently, the losses would also naturally go up, too.

With such a huge drop in revenue, other things are sure to follow: a bigger budget deficit, higher interest rates on government debts, greater difficulty in servicing those debts, a falling peso. And when that happens, the government can kiss its hopes of getting a credit-rating upgrade goodbye, along with its campaign to attract more investments. Thus, it was obviously a dumb thing for Defensor to announce the plan (even before the Cabinet could discuss it thoroughly), and the markets quickly told him so The Palace had to take back his announcement in a hurry to placate the markets and some very worried businessmen.

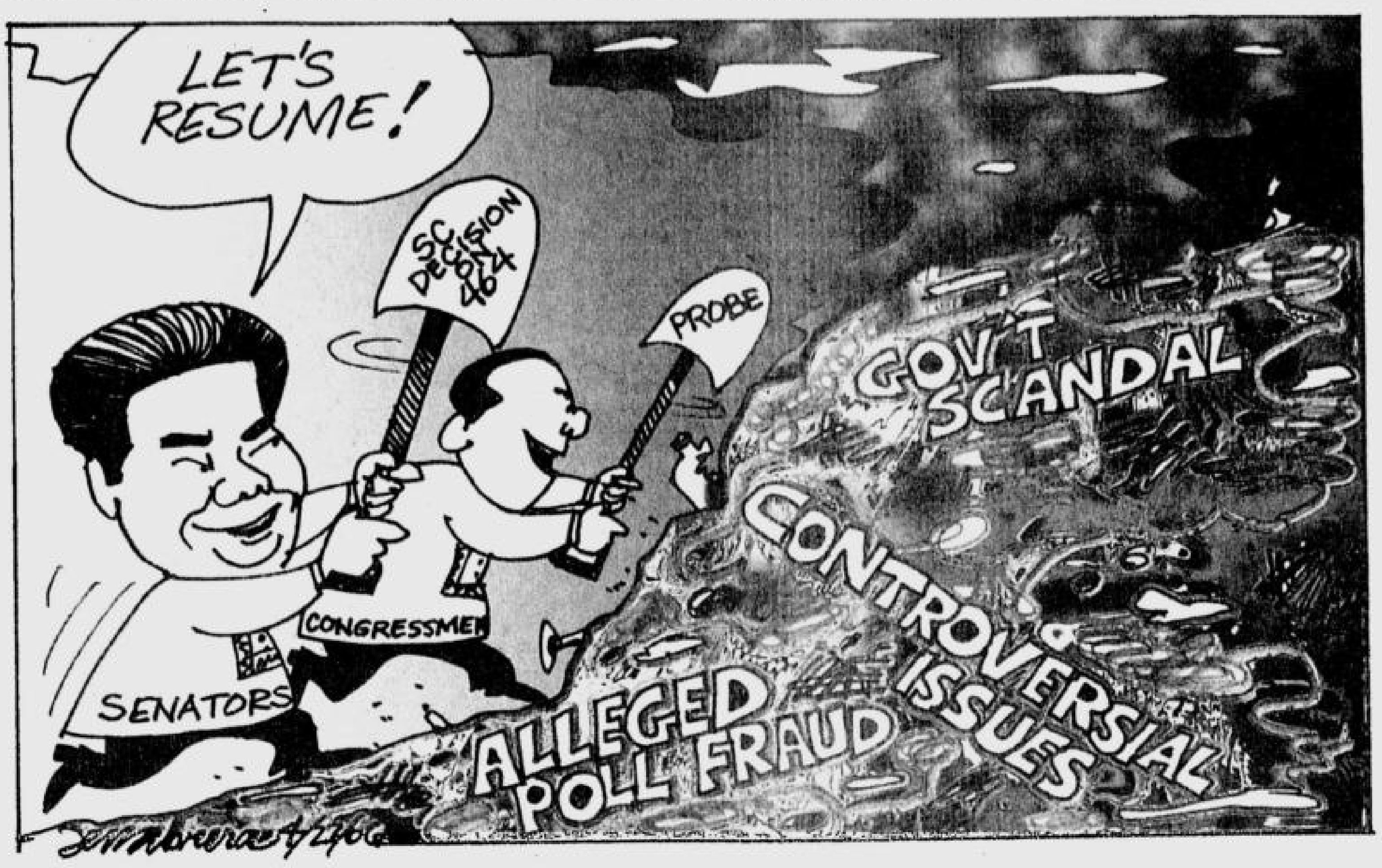
Now some of the country's economic managers are saying the government might just lower the import tariffs on oil and impose energy conservation measures—like operating on Daylight Saving Time—and try to speed up the oil-substitution program with the enactment of the bill mandating the use of ethanol and other biofuels. But all these will be too little or too late to provide any measure of relief for the Filipino people. For instance, doing completely without the import tariff will not bring oil prices down to any significant degree. And it will take a couple of years at least for the biofuel program to have any noticeable effect on the market.

In the meantime, will Filipino consumers just have to grin and bear it as oil prices continue to skyrocket?

The fact is that the government is not as helpless in slowing the rise of oil prices as it pretends to be. For one thing, there is good reason to believe that the escalation of prices of local oil products is not completely due to external factors, like real or threatened disruptions in oil supplies or the rising world demand for oil. When the two local oil refiners practically double their profits over a period of one year without having any new sources of income, some price-gouging must be taking place. It is most likely that they have been taking advantage of the volatility of international crude prices to mask an opportunistic pricing policy. But the administration doesn't even want to look into this.

Neither is it true that the government cannot keep its deficit targets without the VAT on oil products. This can be done by cutting down on unnecessary and wasteful expenses, like the projects funded from the pork barrel of congressmen and senators. The pork barrel alone will cost taxpayers P21 billion this year. But an administration that depends on the goodwill of lawmakers for its survival cannot be expected to cut this from the budget.

No wonder they can't suspend the collection of VAT. They have already divided it up.



'Ley del estomago'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

SPANISH IS A SUPERB LANGUAGE FOR epithets. The Castillan phrase *sin verguenza* ("shameless") bites. But the acid is diluted in English epithets like: base, despicable or vile.

That Iberian phrase crossed our mind when former Senate President Jovito Salonga bristled at the Presidential Commission on Good Government's brokering a compromise deal on hidden Marcos wealth. The move, he said, had "shameful implications."

Commissioner Ricardo Abcede said the PCGG had started "exploratory talks" with a Marcos representative. Would it cover shell foundations in "hot-money" havens like Lichtenstein, Bermuda, Antilles, etc.? The scope is murky at best. But Abcede was confident a compromise could be wrapped up in a year.

That deal would pivot around Imelda Marcos' "prior condition." Specifically, she'd pick a foundation to receive "part of the proceeds of any compromise" agreed on.

That's what the representative claims. His/her bona-fides have not been established. That provides—as even amateur negotiators know—"deniable status": offers can be disclaimed at whim.

"Salonga's disquiet, however, stems from basic grounds." If brigands set the rules, then law, as any self-respecting nation understands it, will crumble.

In its place, we'd have what Latinos call: "*Ley del estomago.*" (Law of the stomach.) The phrase is short. It's to the point. No frills. Also, its meaning is obscene because the expedient dislodges what is just.

Thus, in a letter to Malacañang, Salonga pointedly noted: "No denial had come from the President." Was the silence a signal that a presidential nod has been given to a deal that'd also sweep in coconut levy funds? This would "have adverse effects…on tens of thousands of coconut farmers."

Sen. Joker Arroyo, in fact, questioned last January the same zippered-lip stance of Malacañang. PCCG Chair Camilo Sabio then had lofted a trial balloon on a "a compromise deal" with businessman Eduardo Cojuangco on the coco levy cases. The senator zapped the President's authorization by silence.

President Arroyo has long fiddled with the idea of a fire sale for PCGG-sequestered assets. Presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye, in January 2005, hinted that levies could buttress the treasury. Bill collectors, a bedraggled opposition and volatile oil prices, snapping at her heels, have whetted the President's appetite.

But chiseling away at the levy is theft the second time around. (This blood money belongs to powerless coconut farmers.) By so doing, the President would turn "deaf to the sighs of orphans and drink the tears of children." This demands a hefty dose of *sin verguenza*.

The Supreme Court has ruled that levies are public funds, not crony portfolios. In May 2004, the Sandiganbayan decided that 27 percent of San Miguel shares, bought with levy funds, were "owned by government, in trust for all farmers." Justices Teresita Leonardo de Castro, Diosdado Peralta and Francsico Villaruz directed that the shares be "reconveyed."

On this judicial foundation, the Kilosbayan and Katarungan groups led by Salonga wrote: "In a few months," the courts will resolve Cojuangco's claim to ownership shares in 14 coconut industry investment firms. PCGG would brazenly encroach on the court's jurisdiction, if it preempted a forthcoming judicial decision."

True. But that would be par for the course, if *ley del estomago* operates as a parallel de facto legal system. Even Imelda's affection for nameless foundations could be sanctioned in a regime fueled by gastric juices.

All recovered Marcos wealth, by law, must be funneled into the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). That was the case with the $638 million in Marcos loot, recovered by the PCGG under the late Haydee Yorac. The regime frittered much of that in "shameless" (*sin verguenza*) 2004 election spending. But that's another column.

What has really the Marcos Foundation done for the poor? Fund "studies" to rewrite the history of the dictatorship? Anything else?

International news agencies tracked 17 "foundations" from Lichtenstein to Switzerland. Few Filipinos heard of "Vibur," "Palmy," "Spring Blizzard," "Lazano," "Avertina," "Charis," etc. None worked among the poor here. Were they just cases of pseudo benevolence masking grand larceny?

An Observer investigative report dealt with "offshore trusts, secretive 'foundations' (that have been) systematically misused by a sweep of international villains." Conal Walsh said among the clients were "former Philippine ruler Ferdinand Marcos, Columbian drug lord Pedro Escobar" and others.

Australian courts heard how Marcos funneled to Sydney, between 1982 and 1985, funds from the Lichtenstein foundation Vibur. The money went to a then-pregnant former Playboy model: Evelyn Hegyesi. Her daughter was named Analisa Josefa. "Marcos' mother was Josefa," Sun Herald's Frank Walker reported.

Taxpayers should, like Salonga, buck *ley del estomago* measures. In addition, they should follow Mark Twain's suggestion: When these officials die, don't just stay away from their funerals. "Instead, write a nice letter to say that you approve of them."

We should, meanwhile, not fret. Our street wordsmiths can match the Castillans epithet for epithet, as in *kapalmuks*.

* * *

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Yet again, alternatives

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

LEO DACANAY OF TACLOBAN WROTE A thoughtful letter in our Letters section last Monday. "I was for GMA before," he said, "but not anymore." Today, he could see that GMA's and her allies' "true intention is to perpetuate themselves in power and get rid of the Senate which has proven itself to be a stumbling block to the administration's self-serving designs."

But—and here's the part that gets interesting—"like the silent majority, I don't see anybody in the opposition as a better alternative. Nevertheless, I encourage every Filipino, whether in the public or private sector, not to be silent but to make known his or her stand. If you don't trust GMA, put a sticker 'I don't trust GMA' on your cars, houses, offices, tennis rackets, cups, T-shirts, cell phones or on anything visible. Then let's plan our next move."

I agree with the spirit of protest Dacanay sends, but I beg to disagree with his part about alternatives.

First off, I don't see why we should find a "better alternative" for GMA first, from the opposition or elsewhere, before we remove her from office. Removing GMA from office by, for, and in itself is the alternative. It is not just the better alternative, it is the only alternative. The principle is called crime and punishment: Where someone has committed a crime, he (or she) must be punished. Unless we grasp that and apply that, we will never find a way to "move on" however we wrack our brains for it. The only way we'll move is round and round in circles.

Stopping evil by itself is an alternative. You see someone being held up at knife point in an alley, you yell your head off "*Magnanakaw!*" You do not walk up to the mugger and propose to him alternative ways of finding the money he needs for a sick wife or mother. Maybe you can do that later on as part of penal reform—after you have jailed him. But not while you see him committing a crime. The only alternative to a crime being done is to stop a crime from being done. Or to catch and punish the criminal if he has done it already.

The idea of keeping GMA around because we lack a "better alternative" to her from the opposition is not only foolish, it is dangerously foolish. Can you imagine that principle holding sway for the rest of the country? Henceforth, we may not remove any mayor or governor who routinely steals the people's money or, worse, the vote, because there is no alternative to him, he has bought or murdered his rivals already. All the alternative that will be left to the people is to leave the country.

GMA stole the vote. That is patent in the "Helllo Garci" tape. Whether she could have won without calling up Garci is a moot point. The presidency is a sacred thing. You may not entrust it to someone who may or may not have stolen the vote, you may entrust it only to someone who clearly did not.

Quite apart from all that, what has GMA achieved that is so outstanding it is near-impossible for us to find a "better alternative" for her? She is not the solution, she is the problem; she is not the pilot, she is the baggage. Today, we have to waste so much time and energy not just to get started but just to get back to the starting line. FO 464 is a case in point. While it is cause for celebration that the Supreme Court has junked that idiocy, it is cause for gnashing of teeth that we have to exert ourselves just to remove something that should never have been there in the first place. The same is true of 1017 or its effects, which today include Malacañang's usurpation of authority to grant rally permits (the power belongs to the mayor), the murder of journalists and leftists, and attempts to intimidate media. We have to exert ourselves just to get those oppressions out of the way. Move on? With the way we're constantly being pushed back, it's all we can do to get back to stasis.

The corollary to removing GMA is simple and logical. It is elections. The problem is that we have an illegitimate president, the solution is to have a legitimate president. The problem is that GMA stole the vote from the voters, the solution is to give the vote back to the voters. Where there is crime, there must be punishment. Where there is injustice, there must be restitution.

I cannot belabor it enough. The question of who should replace GMA is not something anybody can just decide. It is something, the voters, and only the voters, can decide. Easy enough to find a better alternative to GMA, even a janitor is a better alternative to GMA. But that is not for anyone of us to say, that is something for the voters in their collective wisdom to say. Of course, one can argue that the voters do not always show that collective wisdom, if indeed they do at all. They have been known to put a George W. Bush in power. But that's part of democracy. It's a horrible system, as Churchill said, but the rest just happen to be worse.

The only thing worse than elections is no elections—or a patently fraudulent one. We've seen the virulent effects of the first with martial law and the second with Gloria.

Putting stickers on cars and every conceivable fixture of daily life that say "I don't trust GMA" is fine. But the person to whom it is being addressed is past being embarrassed or forced out by moral suasion. The better alternative to that is civil disobedience. If a fake president can refuse to resign, the real citizens can refuse to obey. Why on earth should I pay taxes to someone who has no right to use them—indeed who resolutely misuses them to cling to power? Or if you are a cop or soldier, why on precinct or barracks should you obey the orders of a "commandeer-and-cheat"?

We've never lacked for real alternatives. If only we would have the eyes to see them.

Justice—the higher standard

COMMENTARY

Asuncion David Maramba

"DEUS CARITAS EST," THE FIRST ENCYCLICAL of Pope Benedict XVI is 51 pages long—32 pages on love, 16 pages on works of charity, and three pages on Church and State and/or Church and politics.

"*Bawal ang* politics," said relieved conservatives. "Discouraging," said those who hope "to inject the Church more directly into politics." Let's see.

The Pope repeats the Church position three times. Let's take one. "The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. She cannot and must not replace the State. **Yet** at the same time, she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper. A just society must be the achievement of politics, not of the Church. **Yet** the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply." (emphases mine)

That may look like "*bawal ang* politics." But note the repeated "yet" (which also appears in the other two re-statements); likewise the phrase "must not remain on the sidelines."

What can be inferred? Statements from the top, the Pope's in this case, cannot but be safe, abstract and generic. The nitty-gritty of the application happens down in a particular country-diocese-parish—in specific, concrete, often controversial situations that bishops and priests must tackle.

In the widely accepted up-down-down-up model of governance, the person on top doesn't make a blueprint to be imposed on everybody without inputs from below. In Church matters, this is reflected in "collegiality" which, as we have already mentioned in the past, is a plea really to "trust the bishops" and to trust the priests down the line. Even with advisers, the Pope can't have his pulse on every country-diocese-parish, especially when these are in turmoil. It is our bishops and priests who will know what's happening from Aparri to Jolo. There is leeway for the two sides of the coin of Church and politics: keep off when you can; step in if you must.

And when they see fit to step in, what intervention will they take: calls to prayer (as they often or only do); exhortations (another favorite)/the written word or calls to action; outright action (as what happens in perilous or urgent situations); or combinations thereof?

But overarching everything to determine involvement in politics is justice. It took rock star, Bono, to make me see the light. To President Bush and guests at a National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C., Bono said simply and forthrightly, "It's not about charity, it's about justice ... you're good at charity ... But justice is the higher standard." In simple language, too, Carlos Abesamis, S.J., in "Backpack of a Jesus-Seeker," writes: "The kingdom of God is a new world on earth ... filled with life-blessings for human beings and for the rest of creation"; pre-stated by Jesus in the blessings of the Beatitudes; re-stated by theologians as a "kingdom of justice, peace and freedom" and implied by the Pope in his encyclical.

Justice is the centerpiece. It is for this kingdom of God, this, "new world in which justice dwells," that the Church exists, whose "institution" sometimes labors under a confusion of "kingdoms."

Clearly, justice will not be served on a silver platter, not by a long shot. In our country, politics penetrates every aspect of our lives, and many politicians waylay chunks of "life-blessings" on their way to every Filipino. Clearly justice has to be fought for. Fighting for justice is the more difficult course; it is a task full of conflicts, obstacles, hits and misses.

Charity (in which the Church excels) is the easier, feel-good option. But clearly, even huge doses of charity (some administered as substitutes for justice or cover-ups for injustice) can't spread life-blessings, except during Christmas, calamities, fiestas and funerals.

Several of our bishops and priests have chosen the more difficult road; this is not surprising, considering the Church's impressive history of social action and its "preferential option for the poor." Note that most of the causes they're into are patently justice issues or justice-related: Bishop Oscar Cruz against gambling; Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarra against Proclamation 1017; Archbishop Fernando Capalla for due process for leftist congressmen; the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP) for victims of repression; Bishops Leonardo Medroso and Arturo Bastes, Msgr. Crisanto de la Cruz and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) against mining; Fr. Joaquin Bernas, S.J. for the court's swift action on Proclamation 1017 and EO 464; the CBCP warning on the ongoing politicians, 'er, "people's initiative" for Cha-cha; Bishop Precioso Cantillas, in a stunning combination of charity and justice, offering shelter and education for the Leyte landslide victims—for education is the handmaid of justice. We haven't seen the end of our local hierarchy taking the difficult path.

John Paul II stepped into Poland politics to end communism. If a new Hitler were a-borning, Benedict XVI would step into the politics of his homeland. Sometimes, we seem to have a surfeit of "love" and "caring"; it's almost saccharine. Justice is the higher standard.

Asuncion David Maramba is a retired professor, book editor and occasional journalist. Comments to marda_ph@yahoo.com; fax 8210659

Surfing Everest

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

THE TWO GIANT PHILIPPINE TELEVISION NETworks and their respective Mount Everest climbers are racing to get to the peak and hoping to plant a flag of conquest and beam to the world their triumph over height, cold, snow, ice, wind and fatigue. It is not easy for those involved to admit that it is a race to the top. And it is not a question of who gets there first, but whether anyone among the hopeful Filipinos there right now could get to the peak at all and come back in one piece.

One hears the usual cliché about conquest of self—that is, the Himalayas within—before triumph over the elements. That is indeed what it is. But when competing media networks—ABS-CBN and GMA-7—do a running coverage of this first-time effort of Filipinos whom the networks are betting on separately, one cannot help but worry. Climbing Everest is not an ordinary sport. It is a life-threatening endeavor, a conquest of a lifetime, if one makes it.

One cannot but be concerned not only about the safety of the climbers involved (a team for ABS-CBN and a lone climber for GMA-7) and also about how viewers would perceive this whole thing.

Is this about ratings again? Couldn't the two networks just have covered everyone—the so-called Philippine team (ABS-CBN's) and lone climber Romi Garduce (GMA-7)? After all, the climbers are all carrying the Philippine flag. I don't mean they have to take the same route. What if one network makes it and the other doesn't? I dread to see the outcome of such a situation.

A story by Alcuin Papa in the INQUIRER said that the ABS-CBN team was scheduled to make an attempt in 2007. But with Garduce, who is supported by GMA-7, forging on, the ABS-CBN team must do it now. That's how it looks, and there's no denying now that it's a race. As team co-leader Butch Sebastian said, "Let's not deny it. It's a race. Who are we fooling?" His teammates Leo Oracion and Erwin "Pastor" Emata are the ones to make the attempt for team ABS-CBN.

Sebastian himself said that the network wars might have increased the danger to the climbers. His warning: "The danger is already there regardless of the network war, unless they are silly enough to take the unnecessary risks by letting themselves be affected by all the media hype. I hope they don't do anything dangerous. Among us mountaineers, you wouldn't wish anything bad happening to any climber."

That last sentence tells you about the bond that exists among mountain lovers. It is like they have heard the same music emanating from distant peaks. Why spoil that? Do we need to show the world what it is like to be Filipino and fragmented?

Last week a team of INQUIRER mountain climbers (women and men) gathered at the office before starting off for Mount Pulag. I watched them lugging their gear and trying on the weights on their backs, and I could see how flushed they were with excitement. I could sense the bond that has formed among them. (A number of us in the INQUIRER have our respective virtual mountains to hurdle on the ground, like the weekly sweat-cercise and other bulge-busting, muscle-building work-outs.)

One can't help noting that the Filipino climbers departed from their politically charged country only to arrive in Nepal as it was heating up with its share of political strife. I had been in Nepal during more peaceful times and it is indeed a country worth exploring. One does not have to conquer Everest.

One of the books in my summer reading pile is "Surfing the Himalayas: A Spiritual Journey" by Frederick Lenz. This is a first-hand account given by a snowboarding American who makes a trip to the Himalayas in search of the ultimate high. (It includes post-card style photos, too.) In the process, he surfs into an experience more transcendent than he had expected.

It must have been karmic destiny when the writer runs smack into a Tantric Buddhist monk named Master Fwap, who takes him in as a spiritual apprentice. As the author said, "Using snowboarding as a path to enlightenment, the charming and learned Master Fwap shows how, by freeing the mind and challenging the soul, one can master any mountain—and master (one)self."

Here are excerpts from the exchange between the student and the master while they survey the snow-covered peaks that surround them, while on various sides of the peaks, puny individuals scale to physically reach the summit of their desires.

"Look around you," (Master Fwap) continued. "We are in a valley that is surrounded by the Himalayas on all sides. There is nothing here except snow-covered mountains and the rhododendron forest. The only people who live here are Buddhist monks who constantly meditate on the dharma—on the happiest thoughts and feelings of the universe. There is no selfishness here. All the energies of the monks are directed toward merging their minds with the ocean of pure nirvanic enlightenment."

"But Master Fwap, is all of the higher energy here because of the luminous energy lines, or is the high energy here emanating from the meditating monks?"

"Originally there were no monks and there was no monastery here," he responded. "There were only the Himalayas and the rhododendron forest. The dimensional planes that correspond to this valley we are in were then, and still are, made up of pure intelligent light."

"The Himalayas are filled with places like this," he continued. "And since there are few, if any, people around these locations, these places of power and enlightenment have remained relatively unpolluted by the aura of worldly human beings."

May the Filipinos attempting to scale the peaks of the Himalayas discover the places of power and enlightenment.

Happy summer reading.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Lambino's lapse

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE CLAIM OF RAUL LAMBINO—COURTESY OF colleague Bel Cunanan—is that their website (www.sigawngbayan.com) has received "a phenomenal nine million visits... since its launch less than three weeks ago." That is, indeed, a phenomenally large figure that makes for quite a phenomenal claim. But beyond the phenomenal assertion, is there really a measurable phenomenon taking place?

When I first visited Sigaw's site on Tuesday morning, an error message appeared: "Due to the huge volume of visitors, this site has exceeded its bandwidth limit and is temporarily shut down. To the Administrator, please contact service provider. Thank you."

I found the error message a bit odd. (An error message appears when a site has used up its allocation of bandwidth for the month.) It was too well written. And usually such notices are utilitarian and matter-of-fact, avoiding self-congratulatory terms like "huge." Somebody responded to my wondering—if it was possible to have a simulated error message—with the following observation: "Could be propaganda. I decided to Google the error message and see if I (could) get a match. Usually, there will be forums or websites talking about the meaning and/or causes of these kinds of error messages, and these websites should appear in the results when you Google the error message. In the case of sigawngbayan's error message, I got ZERO matches, which means: (1) the error message is rarely encountered, therefore nobody asks about it, and it is not discussed in forums and/or websites; (2) it's a pretty new error message, so the web hasn't picked it up yet; (3) it's fake."

As of this writing, the website is back online and trumpets "249,722 Total Site Visits Since April 8, 2006." Obviously, after reading Bel, one has to wonder how that figure can be resolved with the 9 million visits she claimed in her column. But before tackling that disparity, let's clarify some terms.

To be sure, the headline of Bel's column ("nine million hits") contradicts the body of her column: hits are different from visits. (As a colleague familiar with online publications tartly put it, "Hits is how idiots track sites.") Website visits is a more precise and useful statistic. A tech-savvy colleague obliged me with a layman's explanation: "Hit is a request for an individual image or text item on a website. There are many hits to one page, which is why the figure tends to be high and inflated. A pageview refers to the viewing of a single html page, disregarding all that page's individual components. Several continuous pageviews from a single IP (the numerical address assigned a computer when it connects to the Internet) constitute a visit."

So let's assume that the body of Bel's column referred to visits meaning pageviews, and that Lambino knows pageviews are a more credible number to track, but not hits. In which case, if Lambino's site says 249,722 visitors/pageviews since April 8, at the time he talked to Bel, how did the number inflate to 9 million? This question—"*'yung dagdag, 'yung dagdag*," as one reader mirthfully put it had me and many online readers interested.

Dean Jorge Bocobo, scientifically inclined blogger, says the Sun Star Davao has Lambino saying in an April 17 article, that Sigaw's site had garnered 40,000 visitors. By April 25, the number had grown tremendously (five-fold in a week: just based on the smaller figure). But from 40,000 to 9 million? The number of additional visitors—8,950,000—in a single week, Bocobo notes, is beyond belief. Then again, Bocobo sees something's odd about the "sitemeter" itself: "The other dead giveaway is the dead sitemeter or counter itself. What website administrator would use a sitemeter that only updates its displayed result every 12 hours? Anyone with 9 million hits in about two weeks would be running a couple of live sitemeters to show how much traffic it's getting. The only reason to run a dead sitemeter is so that nosey visitors can't observe how much the meter increments every time you 'hit' or visit the site."

Erwin Rafael, a blogger who teaches in a prominent university, did some further research:

"I need to make a test to see if the site is, at the very least, deemed relevant in the worldwide web. So I Googled '*sigaw ng bayan*' and, lo and behold, not one webpage from the Sigaw ng Bayan website showed up in the results. Surely, a site that generates 9 million hits in just three weeks would be deemed important by Google's PageRank technology! Well, that's assuming that those 9 million hits were not fictitious.

"I also tried to search for the page in the Alexa website, which ranks top webpages based on traffic. Sigaw ng Bayan was nowhere to be found in its rankings. Interestingly, Capt. Nicanor Faeldon's website, which has only 1,160,490 hits, was ranked No. 239,537.

"But still, to be fair, I need to make an empirical test to determine if 9 million hits could at least be plausible for the Sigaw ng Bayan website. To generate 9 million hits in three weeks, it has to average 428,571 hits per day or 17,857 hits per hour or 298 hits per minute or five hits per second for the whole three-week period.

"Wikipedia, the most popular free encyclopedia on the web, averaged only three hits per second on the day of Sept. 11, 2001.

"Sounds plausible? Of course. That is, if you believe that the worldwide web was more interested in the Charter change of a small country in Southeast Asia than in the tragic events of 9/11. Which reduces the possibility of that happening to about ... zero."

Whether hits or visits, was Sigaw ng Bayan's crowing more fiction than fact? My blog (www.quezon.ph/blog) has links to the comments and blogs quoted above, so you can judge for yourself.

Leaving Manila

YOUNG BLOOD

Ariel Alesna-Llanto

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

THE SKY WAS OVERCAST. GRAY FLUFFS OF CLOUDS loomed over the cityscape. Under them, a metropolis was going at full throttle, with automobile horns honking in crowded streets, hawkers promoting their wares, police sirens sounding from somewhere and yuppies marching to their offices. The polluted haze veiled everything, making it look as if it were late afternoon, when sunlight usually loses its vitality. But it was mid-morning, though the day appeared to have started a tad later than it normally does.

This was how Manila presented itself to me, on my ride to the airport for my flight to Cebu. These are the sights and sounds of a place, buckling under the weight of degradation, that I will carry with me, long after my feet have touched the soil of my hometown. Skies which have the clarity of a cup of espresso—that is the image that will stick in the memory of a fiercely critical Cebuano.

I gave Manila six years of my life. Toward high school graduation, my parents made the decision to relocate to Manila. For as long as I can remember, my Dad, who is in the military, had to shuttle between Cebu and Manila (or wherever he was assigned). He would arrive in Cebu Friday evening and fly back to Manila early Monday morning. It was a tiring and expensive arrangement, so when it looked like he would never get the wished-for Cebu assignment, my parents hauled us kids and the kitchen sink to Manila. I went to college in a university in Katipunan Avenue, while my sisters continued their education in a Catholic school south of Manila.

From the outset, I had a problem with the incredibly high cost of living in Manila, as well as the horrendous traffic. They were obstacles to youthful spontaneity. How could you go on spur-of-the-moment trips with your buddies, if there were monstrous traffic jams to reckon with? How could you even think about going out, after school, when the mere thought of braving congested streets to reach your destination already wore you out?

What's more, everything cost an arm and a leg. Parking in a dark, dingy spot meant shelling out P30. Dining out would cost P90, at the very least. Going to Tagaytay or other spots favored by the *barkada* required at least P100 in toll fees. Every move you made had to be budgeted and planned. Spontaneity was best left to the risk-takers, and those who had all the time, all the patience and all the cash they needed.

I started to uncover social nuances at school. I have vivid memories of roaming around the campus, trawling for evidence of the disparities between the way Cebuanos and Manileños spoke in particular. I winced at the sound of the Tagalog accent and words finding their way to English statements. Many girls—and, to my horror, guys—spoke like Kris Aquino.

An amusing breed, known as *coños*, acted as if they didn't know how to speak straight Tagalog, opting to communicate in a mangled mish-mash of Tagalog and English (Taglish). They were far from being down-to-earth. You'd be hard put to see them wearing anything less than brand-name clothes and footwear. In contrast, many wealthy Cebuanos are comfortable wearing beat-up sandals and shirts bearing the logos of shipping companies. You can bring them to any sidewalk eatery for a meal, without any resistance.

I was not alone in making this observation. My high school batch mates, who were enrolled in the same university, also felt some distance put by these "*sosyal*" beings. At times, our gatherings would turn into occasions for dissecting these cultural differences. The consensus we reached was that we would never find the same laid-back friends we had back home.

This conviction drove us to isolation. Unconsciously, there was no wholehearted effort to fit in with the Tagalog-speaking crowd. Not even an effort to elevate our elementary-level, slang-sounding delivery of their language to something less humorous. We clung to each other, like men huddled over a bonfire. And when the winds of displacement were too much to handle, we found every excuse to fly to Cebu: the Sinulog, three-day weekends, a dear friend's birthday.

Some people would call this hometown pride, and others would see this as proof that our minds were closed or as evidence of the rebelliousness of diehard Cebuanos. But it was a mix of both, I suppose.

Inevitably, the big question, before and after graduation, was, "*Asa man ka igka-human, bai?*" (Where are you going after graduation?) Most knew the answer already: they were going back home to Cebu, some to work in the family business, others to "see what they want to do with their lives." My reply came months later, when I got a job at a publishing company. "*Dinhi sah ko, bai.*" (I'll stay here in the meantime.)

It's been nearly two years since I accepted a job at a publishing company. A lot of things have happened since then, events that have gradually matured my understanding of the cultural differences between Manila and Cebu. Events which have led me, nonetheless, to the waiting lounge of the domestic airport, waiting for the flight that will bring me back home for good.

I do not blindly revile this place. What I have is a critical eye for Manila. I do not regret my almost two-year stint in the competitive corporate world. I do not regret the four years I spent in college, for I was not only under the tutelage of the best teachers in this country, but my classroom went beyond the fences of the school, encompassing the museums, coffee houses and music clubs and this widened my knowledge of the arts, culture and history. Without their aid, I would never have discovered the things I feel most passionate about: literature, writing, Woody Allen and Hitchcock, films, and art as a whole.

The overwhelming reality, however, is that Manila is truly a waste. *Sayang*. It has seeds of greatness, its bright spots. It is the hub of arts and culture of the country. It is a wellspring of employment opportunities, offering new grads a variety of choices to explore their passions professionally. It is the shopping capital of the Philippines.

Unfortunately, these bright spots are difficult to behold, amid the city's dispiriting problems: the horrendous traffic, high cost of living, pollution and official corruption. Much like the pall of pollution over the Pasay skyline, obscuring the city underneath, Manila's worst qualities easily eclipse its admirable attributes. One has to overlook the sad signs of degradation. One has to squint through the haze to see what glitters.

I had to leave Manila to get a better perspective and see its heart and soul.

Ariel Alesna-Llanto finished AB Economics at the Ateneo de Manila University in 2003. He joined the marketing arm of ABS-CBN Publishing right after graduation. A year ago, he decided to go home to Cebu to work as an advertising writer of the Cebu Daily News. He died of cancer in December last year.

Independent audit of CARP urged

AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF the landowners in the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC), I would like to point out that our Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) under Presidential Decree 27 (1972) and Republic Act 6657 (1987) has been enforced vigorously for the past 34 years.

Yet, no third-party independent audit has been conducted to determine whether the program has been a success or a failure, or needs to be corrected.

CARP is meant to serve not only as a vehicle for the physical distribution of land but also to alleviate poverty, increase agricultural productivity and bring about general prosperity in the countryside.

Considering that more than 5.5 million hectares out of about 9 million hectares of arable lands, have already been distributed, it is now imperative that an independent audit be conducted to determine:

1. Whether the lands distributed remain devoted to agriculture or whether they have been converted for residential, commercial or industrial use.
2. Whether the original farmer-beneficiaries are still "tilling" the lands or whether they have sold out their lands.
3. Whether agricultural productivity increased and poverty decreased.
4. Whether the former landowners have been paid by the Land Bank.
5. Whether the farmer-beneficiaries have paid their amortizations, real estate taxes, etc.

Out of 33 countries that initiated land reform programs, only three countries were successful, namely, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Yet, Japan covered only 1.9 million hectares, Korea, 600,000 hectares and Taiwan 400,000 hectares. A common denominator was a rigid audit of the beneficiaries.

—**EDUARDO F. HERNANDEZ,**
hermosa@zpdee.net

Heckling at corruption

THE HECKLING OF GLORIA Macapagal-Arroyo, which happened in Cavite, reminds me that the province was one of the first eight provinces that revolted against Spain. ("Students heckle GMA in Cavite graduation," PDI, 4/22/06)

The students were like the rays of the sun in our flag, suddenly breaking through dark clouds and exposing to shame GMA, Ayong Maliksi and all the corrupt politicians and bureaucrats in the Philippines.

Graft and corruption is the No. 1 cause of poverty in the Philippines.

—**ROY FABROS,**
755 South Selkirk St,
Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada

No SUNBURN this Summer at QUEZON CITY
ACE WATER SPA
Leisure Hydrotherapy
Opens DAILY from 6AM-11PM
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Hot Herbal Pool
Kids Area
REMINDERS:
➤ BRING PROPER SWIMMING ATTIRE AND BATH TOWEL.
FEMALE : BATHING SUIT MALE : FITTED SWIMWEAR (BEACH SHORTS - NOT ALLOWED)
➤ BRINGING OF FOODS AND BEVERAGES ARE PROHIBITED.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Looking beyond what we see

I WOULD JUST LIKE TO EXPRESS my view on the resignation of Thaksin Shinawatra. I believe he did the right thing for the welfare of Thailand. I believe that by stepping down from his position, he saved the Thai people from a helpless situation. Thaksin resigned because he loved his country.

I believe Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo must do the same thing—that is, resign. But GMA can't do a similar act because she is consumed with pride.

The political situation is worsening, and a Charter change, though a good idea, wouldn't work while GMA occupies the presidency. Some say that if she steps down, the country will fall into greater chaos since nobody is fit enough to replace GMA. I believe we should trust that there is a person out there who truly loves this country and would lead its people righteously. All we need to do is to look beyond what we see. We only see the top politicians as well as the "in" people in politics today. There are those people who are seldom noticed but can actually make a difference.

Who are they? There are many. But then, my opinion wouldn't count since I'm not even 18. But those who are 18 and above should see voting not as a right, but as a responsibility.

—**DEAN BEAU LOZARIE,**
confused_confucious01@yahoo.com

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Available in different models
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email: info@dexterton.com
website: www.dexterton.com

Classroom thoughts, joys and fears of a teacher

WE, TEACHERS, HAVE A VERY peculiar job. A chief difficulty in our job is poverty. We belong to a badly paid profession. Nevertheless, we have a secure job, because there will always be young people who need to be taught. Besides, there is happiness in helping develop the young. It is a reward that can't be bought.

The teacher's second reward is that his job makes him use his mind on important and interesting subjects. All over the world, people can have jobs which, though well-paying, are tedious and don't really need serious thinking. It's only the money that makes the jobs tolerable for them. In addition, a teacher learns as he teaches.

The question in my mind right now is, with a crisis racking our country, can teachers still produce good leaders? These are times that try a teacher's mettle. It is now torture for a teacher to spend energy, day after day, year after year, making children understand and appreciate the things that really count in life, or trying to inculcate in them the values of honesty, integrity, obedience and truth.

Have teachers, perhaps, failed to teach our young the proper values? Look at our leaders today, the corruption in government, the human rights violations, the betrayal of public trust, the cheating in elections.

How do we discuss government irregularities—for which no one is held accountable—inside our classrooms? But why even worry about what is outside a teacher's job, some frightened teachers would ask. But simple questions need simple answers. What do you do when some curious students ask questions about truth? The teacher should make himself or herself relevant. Are we, teachers, making ourselves relevant in these trying times?

Jesus' disciples scolded parents for bringing little children to Jesus. But Jesus rebuked his disciples, telling them it was impossible for a man or a woman to receive the Kingdom of God unless he or she first becomes like a child. Then he took the little children in His arms and blessed them. Are we teaching our children the correct values?

The 1986 People Power revolt supposedly won us a new day. It supposedly gave us back our freedom, honor and respect. It supposedly brought us to the promised land of justice, under the hand of the Almighty.

Things turned out though far from the expected. Nothing shows this present state of things more tellingly than the promise of another Constitution. If it were a song, it may be playing on different instruments, but still to the same tune. And as it plays, the more the fat pigs feast on pork barrels.

—**ELEUTERIO B. ARCOS,**
teacher,
Balumbato Elementary School,
Balumbato, Balintawak, QC

Wasteful use of the power of Philippine media

TWO OUT OF THREE FILIPINOS do not know their Constitution—a sad but not surprising fact. Two out of three are clueless on the ramifications of the people's initiative but are walking encyclopedias on who is dating, marrying, or divorcing whom in show biz. This, too, is sad but not surprising.

In other words, we Filipinos, who pride ourselves to be the most literate Asians, have a twisted sense of values. We are more interested in and relate more with our show-biz idols than with our political leaders. We always look up to the stars but hardly keep our feet on the ground. Most of us Filipinos thrive and survive on fantasy, ignorant of the reality around us.

If the majority of Filipinos are so ignorant of their Constitution, blame it on the media, especially television, because they shirk from their responsibility to inform and educate people who are in the dark when it comes to the various issues that directly affect their lives.

TV programming in our country is rife with show-biz entertainment—about personalities, fantasies, pop culture and that ever-tantalizing spice called scandal; but it has too little on political, civic and social information and education.

Juan de la Cruz may not have the money to go to school, but he can buy an inexpensive TV, *maski na utang lang* (even on a loan). Unfortunately, his television only makes him laugh, cry and fall in love, but it never tries to wake him up and prick his brain so it will start thinking.

He's glued on TV not because he wants to see his future via a Charter change but because he wants to attend the grand English-style wedding of a certain Raymart and Claudine. Philippine television—oh what a waste of power!

—**POMPEYO PEDROCHE,**
PSPedroche@msn.com

A miracle waiting to happen

DUAL CITIZENSHIP IS A VERY good proposition and yes, why not? (Isagani Cruz's "Dual citizenship," PDI, 4/22/06) But with the present political system in the Philippines where too much graft and corruption exists in all levels, I won't bother to go into it.

Of course, I love the Philippines because I grew up there and I had the deepest regrets when I took my oath as a Canadian citizen. But now the regrets have vanished; Canada is one of the best countries to live in. But I'm still a Filipino in thought, word and deed. Only my citizenship has changed.

Like most Filipinos living abroad, I am praying and hoping that the Philippines will change for the better. But I guess the country needs a miracle—a big, big miracle—for that to happen.

—**JOVEN FERMA,**
jovenferma@yahoo.com

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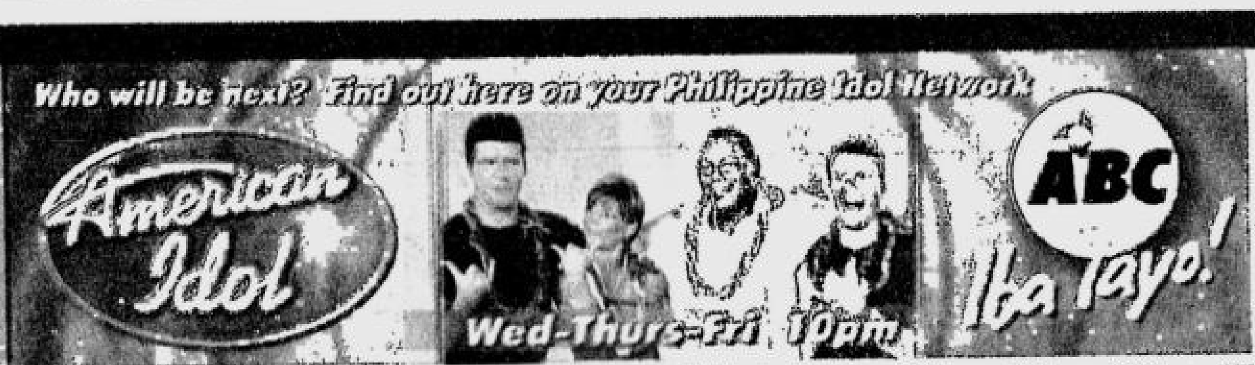
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Thursday, April 27, 2006


Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network
American Idol
Wed-Thurs-Fri 10pm
ABC
Iba Tayo!
ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)	National Geographic	Volleyball League				Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	S.O.S		Wala Yan Sa Lolo Ko		Big News	AI Results Show	Dokyu		Billboard On-Air
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Twins	TV Patrol World		Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Panday	Wonderful Life		Maalaala Mo Kaya			Insider
AXN		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		CSI: Miami (Season II)		30 Seconds To Fame	Samsung Sports World	The 4400		PSI Factor (Season III)		Fear Factor (Season V)		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Sports Disaster VI		Train Wrecks	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Codename Kids Next Door	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons		Power Rangers Wild Force	PokeMon	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Tatlong Taong Walang Diyos								Wala Nang Iibigin Pang Iba				Spirit Warriors				Luv Text	
Cinemax	Father's Day			The Professionals (4:15 PM)				Sleepless In Seattle (6:15 PM)				When The Dark Man Calls			S.W.A.T				Introducing Dorothy Dandridge: A True Story
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	Global Office	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Crossing Jordan		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	North Mission Road	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		What Should You Do?		The Closer		Prison Break	
Discovery Channel		Billion Dollar Disasters		Mega Moves		Animal Face-Off		The Future Is Wild		Extreme Engineering		Moon Machine	Connect	Mythbusters		Mega Moves		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven/ That's So Trendy Week	Wonderful World Of Disney			Tutenstein	Lizzie Mcguire	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '05 Sudden Death 7-Ball		Table Tennis '05 Killerspin	Winter X Games Classic	Women's Pro Billiards: Tour WPBA Grand Lakes Classic		Women's Pro Billiards: Tour WPBA Grand Lakes Classic		Pro Billiards '05 Stars Billiards Championships		Pro Billiards '05 Stars Billiards C'ships		Sportscenter Asia	2005 Kaohsiung World Pool C'ship				Pro Billiards '05 Stars Billiards C'ships
ETC		Veronica Mars 2		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Sanford	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Will & Grace 4	Friends 10	Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Showdog Moms & Dads		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Cenacle Of Divine Mercy	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Virtue Storybook	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	The Sacraments Through The Ages	EWTN Presents		EWTN Live (Encore) With Fr. Mitch Pacwa		Daily Mass Live		Angelus (9:15 PM)	The Seven Sacraments	Images of Mary	Behold the Man: Spirituality for Men	The Journey Home Encore	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royale Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Majika	Encantadia	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Jewel In The Palace		Magpakailanman			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters IV (3:15 PM)		Gentle Ben: Terror On The Mountain				Bewitched	The Nanny	Family Law III		Missing II		Spooks I		The Event			Spooks I (11:45 PM)
HBO				The Sister-in-Law (4:15 PM)				The Fighting Temptations				Rome Ep 10: Triumph		Rome Ep 11: The Spoils	Rome Ep 12: Kalends Of Feb		A Smile Like Yours		
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Shadow Of The Elves	Mission Odyssey	Rune Soldier	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Mission Odyssey
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Eneryo Ladies 9 Ball C'ship				ME TV		Global Family Songs	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Smackdown				JLU	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV			Everybody Hates Chris	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Tyler's Ultimate	Who's Wedding Is It Anyway?		It's Good To Be	Martha		Your Private Island	Genuine Article	E! True Hollywood Story	
MTV Philippines		Punk'D		Sessions Sandwich	Pop Inc		2006 MAA Nominee Specials	MTV Hits		Get Spotted	Rex in the City	MTV Hits	Handpicked Sandwich	TRL		Punk'D		Sessions Sandwich	Rockola
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic	Wild Family Secrets	National Geographic Special		MegaStructures: Airbus A380		Storm Stories S2-1	Storm Stories S1-2	Top 5 - About China	Top 5 - About China	Wow! White Shark: Outside of the Cage		About Asia		Gospel of Judas				Storm Stories S2-2	Storm Stories S1-3
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alas.	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Teledyaryo W/ Ka Lando & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Tunay, Banda At Akusado				Sisu Ang May Sala				Tres Kantos				Tatlo Silang Tatay Ko				Beso
Qtv	Iyaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zenki	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Irene	Noel	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	O, Mare Ko		News On Q	Women's Desk		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9						Global Window	Arangkada Extra Balita	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The 4400		Medium		Invasion		Newswatch Now	Just For Laughs	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Poker Hour
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Wiener TV Shopping		Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Friends Again		SBN Music Video	
Solar Sports						NBA Action	2006 NBA Playoffs					2006 NBA Playoffs					Sportsdesk	Denmark Open Men's Singles Finals	
Sports Plus						World Poker Tour 2		Gillette World Cup Preview 9		Gillette World Cup Preview 9	Nopi Tunervision 6	World Game		World Game		Ray Ban Celebrity Poker Challenge			
Star Movies				Deep Rescue (3:55 PM)			The Sweetest Thing			Moonstruck (6:50 PM)				Five Children And It			Saw		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		American Idol	The Simple Life	The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	American Idol	The Simple Life	Scrubs	8 Simple Rules/ Arrested Development	The Drew Carey Show	Less Than Perfect	Seinfeld	American Idol
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Spirits	TBA	Wazzup Wazzup	World's Craziest Video		Alias (8:20 PM)	Desperate Housewives		News Central	Oprah		Reality World

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Near tears, Estrada lashes out at Singson

From page A1

have one of his sons, opposition Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, as a coaccused who is now out on bail.

Estrada, who is detained in his rest house in Tanay, Rizal, said he also felt worse for his mother, Mary Ejercito. She is turning 101 on May 2.

"If (Singson) was just after me, he should have not dragged my son and (coaccused lawyer) Edward Serapio who had nothing to do with 'jueteng'," he said in Filipino.

"That's all I can say, otherwise I might start crying here," he told the court.

Court asked: Strike out tirade

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio asked the court to strike out from the records Estrada's tirade against Singson.

Estrada's testimony yesterday centered on allegations one of his scholarship foundations had laundered money to the tune of P200 million from jueteng payoffs.

He said he discovered too late that the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation had received the amount and when he did he asked Serapio, then his presidential assistant on political affairs and the EMYF's corporate secretary, to return it to Singson.

Serapio assured him that "I'll do that, Mr. President," but also told him that he might have to also "consult the board of trustees" of the EMYF, made up of respected personalities in business and the academe.

Estrada did not provide a time line but suggested that the matter was overtaken by events leading to his downfall: "I don't know what happened next because the rallies have begun, as well as the impeachment (movement against me)."

His order for Serapio to rid the foundation of alleged dirty money did not materialize, as Estrada later referred to previously marked exhibits showing that the P200 million had remained "intact" in the EMYF's bank account and had, in fact, since grown by P13 million.

Frozen account

Kept at the Strata 100-Ortigas branch of Equitable PCIBank, the EMYF account was among the Estrada assets frozen by the Sandiganbayan in August 2002 in connection with the plunder charge.

A passbook cited by the Estrada lawyers showed that the account's initial deposit of P90,201 was made on April 10, 2000. Following a series of deposits ranging from P5 million to P12 million each, the total breached the P200-million mark by May 11 that year.

By Sept. 30, 2000—or days before Singson unleashed his jueteng exposé against Estrada—the account contained about P201.4 million. It was apparently the last transaction done while Estrada was still in power, as the next entry was already dated July 5, 2004.

Estrada and his defense counsel yesterday furnished the court with an update from the bank showing that the amount had already grown to P213,388,840 as of April 21, 2006.

'Chavit used my name'

"I knew immediately it came from jueteng," said Estrada, who not only tried to belie Singson's earlier testimonies but also to picture him as a scheming crony who merely "used my name" to rake in jueteng collections for himself.

In July 2002, Singson testified that Estrada ordered him to deposit P200 million in jueteng collections in the EMYF account, and that the order was given during a meeting in Malacañang in the presence of Serapio and alleged payola bookkeeper Yolanda Ricaforte.

Ricaforte and Serapio are Estrada's coaccused in the plunder case. Ricaforte remains at large, while Serapio has been granted bail.

Estrada denied giving that order to Singson or holding such a Palace meeting.

"I never had money in his (Singson's) safekeeping ... but later, I learned that there was P200 million deposited in the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation," the ex-President insisted.

He said it was through Serapio that he learned that the P200 million came from Singson and that the latter requested that he remained an "anonymous" donor in the EMYF records.

Chavit's 2 sources of income

Estrada maintained that Serapio, whom he described as a top Ateneo law school graduate, bar topnotcher and lawyer of unquestionable integrity, received the P200 million without knowing where Singson got the money.

"He said, 'I'm sorry, I received the money in good faith.' But I knew the money came from jueteng because it was being offered to me (by Singson) long before," he said.

Singson, he sneered, only has "two sources of income"—jueteng and kickbacks from tobacco excise taxes earmarked for the development of his tobacco-growing province.

Questioned about his policy on charity, Estrada referred to a quote from the late Cardinal Jaime L. Sin to defend himself: "I don't care whether the money came from the devil as long as it can help the poor."

Ironically, Sin was at the forefront of the campaign to oust Estrada in 2001.

Asked if his foundation was used for money laundering, Estrada replied, "That's impossible because all the foundations that I founded are legitimate foundations with a track record."

"If it's true that it's being used for money laundering, why should I put money in the bank account where I can't sign checks. How can I withdraw it?" he asked, noting that as the foundation's chairman emeritus, he had no authority to sign checks.

Estrada said he was too embarrassed to ask donors for the source or nature of money they gave to his foundation, which was organized to provide scholarships for Muslim youths.

Not family of murderers

He vehemently denied Singson's allegation that he ordered his assassination during an incident in 2000 in which heavily armed police stopped Singson's car, an act which Singson interpreted as an attempt on his life.

"Regarding the attempt to kill him, first of all, there has never been any such allegation against me and we are not a family of murderers," he said.

He also dismissed allegations he received P189 million in commissions after instructing two state-run pension funds to invest in shares of a publicly listed company, Belle Corp.

The former president of the Government Service Insurance System, Federico Pascual, had testified he was ordered by Estrada to buy Belle shares.

Witnesses 'threatened'

"That's not true. I never ordered or pressured anybody to buy Belle shares and I never received any commission from anyone," Estrada said. He claimed that the two former executives of the pension funds had been threatened with plunder charges unless they testified against him.

Villa-Ignacio was unimpressed with Estrada's testimony. "Basically, it is a 'I do not know anything' testimony," he said. *With a report from AP*

Low-tech judges could be fired for 'gross ignorance'

From page A1

The joke is not entirely funny as the high court is determined to complete by next year the computerization and Internet connection of all courts in the country.

Speaking before reporters at the Baguio Country Club on Monday, Carpio said the move formed the bulk of the tribunal's bid to modernize the judiciary and be at par with the latest information network systems, like broadband connections and digital libraries.

And the high court, Carpio said, was afraid that judges who do not know how to use computers might be left behind.

E-library of legal materials

"The aim is to operate an e-library (electronic library) accessible to all judges in an effort to help them prepare well-researched decisions in a speedy and timely manner," he said.

"The library will provide all judges access to the same legal materials, creating an environment for consistency of decisions," Carpio said.

Today, the Supreme Court still provides judges printed copies of its decisions and circulars that are sent free through the high court's franking privilege.

"But their thickness actually makes them cargoes," Carpio said, adding that the sending of printed matters will be stopped once all judges become computer literate.

The problem, he said, is that there are judges who are computer illiterate.

Literacy program

Lawyer Milagros Ong, the high court's chief librarian, said the court had a computer literacy program for judges.

Lately, newly appointed judges are being provided hands-on computer training programs during their orientation workshop in Tagaytay City before assuming their respective posts, she said.

"But nothing beats an elaborate computer training. Our concern goes more for old appointees who may not know how to open a compact disc or surf the Internet," Ong said.

Dependent on staff

Ong noted that many judges had become dependent on the computer skills of their staff.

As of March 2006, the judiciary had 1,583 justices and judges from the high court to the municipal circuit courts.

Carpio, chair of the court's committee on computerization and library, said no figures were available as to how many of the country's judges were computer illiterate.

P50-M loan fund for laptops

He said the court had earmarked P50 million as loan fund for judges who are interested to buy their own laptops or personal notebook computers.

He said the notebook computers were in addition to the desktop computers the court had given all courts in order to upgrade its e-library.

The e-library is a database of digitized laws and regulations, and court decisions which can be easily downloaded by judges 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"Thus, a judge can bring his notebook with him while hearing cases and he can easily access the legal principle he needs to rule on issues that would arise during lawyers' oral arguments," Carpio said.

"The judges can also click the 'law list' text and find out if a counsel who appears before him is indeed a member of the bar," he said.

The e-library was launched in November 2004. All judges are given user names to be able to download all the legal materials they need.

Laws, decisions in discs

For judges assigned to areas where there are no Internet service providers, Carpio said they would be sent two CDs—one containing laws and the other, decisions.

Ong said the court had already sent the judges the first set of CDs that contains decisions from January 1996 to December 2005, and laws passed from 1987 to 2005.

By next year, the court expects to complete a database of all laws and decisions from 1901 to 2006.

There have been around 300,000 [laws and decisions] since 1901.

'WAG MONG SABIHIN WALA KANG ALAM TUNGKOL SA MGA NATURAL DISASTERS!

Natural disasters have always been a part of human existence. Everyone has seen the destructive results of earthquakes, typhoons, flash floods and other natural catastrophes on television and newspapers. However, the majority of those who are not affected by these calamities often do not perceive the threat of natural disasters as real.

Many of us adopt the "it won't happen to me" syndrome when the topic of natural disasters is brought up. This attitude which conveys an illusion of security, is the height of human folly. Natural disasters endanger everyone, and like the proverbial thief in the night, they often strike without warning. Disasters come when we least expect them to.

Cognizant of the need to empower the citizenry with the knowledge and capability to prepare and protect themselves against the onslaught of disasters, the National Disaster Coordinating Council has launched the "SAFE KA BA?" National Disaster Preparedness Program. The program aims to put the populace at the center of disaster response, preparedness and mitigation by providing the public vital information about the threats presented by each type of natural catastrophe and by educating the local community on how to prepare for, respond safely and recover from these disasters.

In an effort to create awareness and empower the people against the attacks of disasters, the Office of Civil Defense-National Disaster Coordinating Council has joined hands with the Catholic Media Network to bring you the "SAFE KA BA?" Disaster Management School-On-Air. This groundbreaking 40-part series will impart all the relevant information every citizen needs to know in order to reduce their risk of injury or loss in the event of natural disasters.

Please pass the word around to your family and friends about the "SAFE KA BA?" Radio Show. Remember that when disaster strikes, knowing what to do could mean the difference between life and death.

Avelino J. Cruz, Jr.

Sec. Avelino J. Cruz, Jr.
Secretary of National Defense
and NDCC Chairman

The SAFE KA BA? Show
PROGRAM SCHEDULE

STATION		TIMESLOT	PROGRAM HOST/S
DZWM-AM	Alaminos	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Lydia Orilla
DWTJ-FM	Alaminos	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Lydia Orilla
DZPA-AM	Abra	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Joselito Bigornia & Prism Parel
DWJO-FM	Infanta	SAT 9:30-10:00am	EJ Escolano
DZJO-FM	Baler	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Eliseo Rizal
DZNS-AM	Vigan	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Alex Alonado
DZUL-FM	La Union	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Joel Coloma
DWRV-AM	Bayombong	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Teddy Gamas
DZVT-AM	Mindoro	SAT 10:00-10:30am	Uesy del Valle
DZWT-AM	Baguio	SAT 10:00-10:30am	Casar Marzan
RADYO MARIA	Tarlac	SAT 4:30-6:00pm	Matthew Santiago & Ruben Pangtiran
DWBS-AM	Legaspi	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Jom Mendoza
DWVM-FM	Lucena	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Merlita Zarsuelo & Phil Gerald Zuos
DYDM-AM	Maasin	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Zaldy Ofta & Jun Gorong
DYKA-AM	Antique	MON 10:30-11:00am	Alreen Ysulat
DYRF-AM	Cebu	SAT 3:00-4:00pm	Dennis Taber
DYRD-AM	Tagbilaran	SAT 2:30-3:00pm	Aloy Cosap & Chito Vigame
DXDB-AM	Malaybalay	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Arvel Arais
DXGD-AM	Bongao	FRI 3:00-3:30pm	Babylyn Omar & Thalia Kashir
DXHM-AM	Mati	TUE 9:30-10:00am	Fr. DJ
DXSN-AM	Surigao	SAT 4:00-4:30pm	Reynaldo Bernadez
DZTH-AM	Nueva Ecija	SAT 10:00-10:30am	Bro. Dennis Pascual
DYMA-FM	Santiago	SAT 7:30-8:00pm	Andy de Leon-DJ Lee
DZGN-FM	Sorsogon	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Fr. Leo Dolores
DYAF-AM	Bacolod	SAT 9:30-10:00am	Bong Tano

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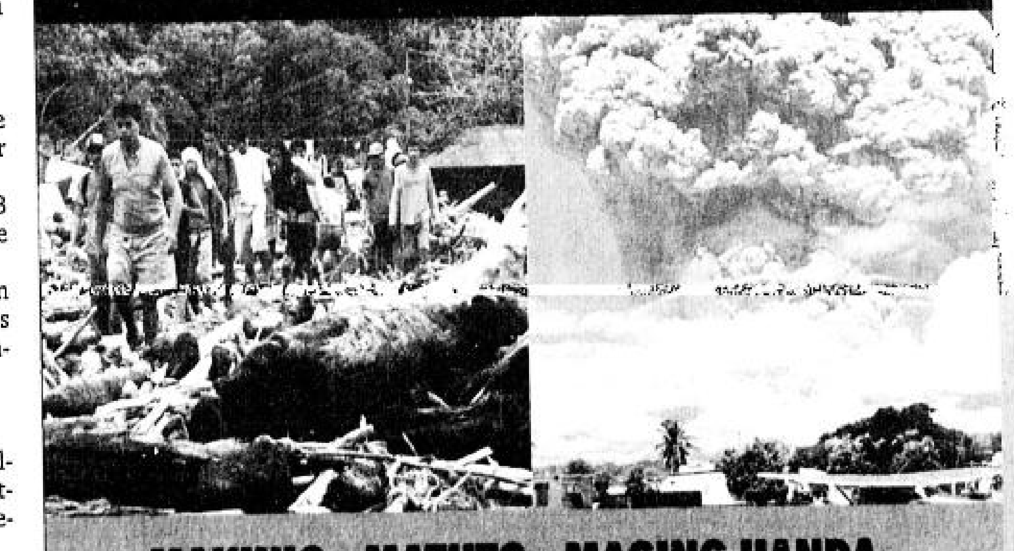

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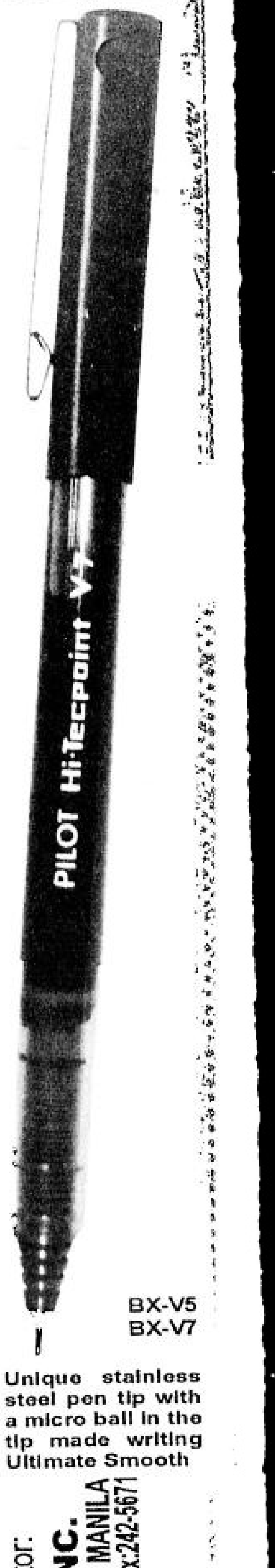

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Floreño G. Solmirano**

THIS MANILA-BOUND passenger bus from Bicol plunged into a ravine along the Maharlika Highway in Sitio Upper Sapinit, Barangay Silangang Malicboy, Pagbilao, Quezon. DELFIN T. MALLARI JR.

'Our happy angel is gone'

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Lucena City

"OUR HAPPY ANGEL IS GONE NOW." ARNEL ARGONES was speaking about his 5-year-old daughter Kyla, the youngest of the seven fatalities in Monday's accident along the zigzag diversion road in Pagbilao, Quezon.

Argones said his child was traveling on Monday dawn with his uncle, Victor, in an RJ Transit bus bound for Manila. Both died when the bus plunged into a 30-meter ravine.

Contrary to newspaper reports, Victor was not the driver of the bus, Argones said.

"Victor was also a bus driver. But he was not the one driving. There was another driver," he said, pointing to a coffin in one of the chapels of Funeraria Pagbilao in Lucena City.

Joel Pancho, who introduced himself as an RJ Transit bus driver on vacation, identified the male victim as Franco Ysrael, of San Jose, Camarines Sur. But he denied that Ysrael was the driver of the ill-fated bus.

Kyla, Victor, Ysrael, Jovie Enterino, 24, Visitacion Ollete, 53, Eduardo Onan and an unidentified woman were the seven passengers who died in the accident, police said.

Bus driver

At first, the victims' families suspected that the bus company was "cooking up" something to muddle the accident report.

A man, who identified himself as Bobby Diaz and representing R.J. Transit, revealed that the bus driver, Felipe Pangan Jr., suffered injuries and was confined in a hospital in Manila.

Diaz was the operations manager of RJ Transit, according to his companion.

The victims' families were surprised when they learned that the driver was in Manila.

"Why there? How come that in the police report that we have, the driver is still unidentified? It seems that the company is hiding something from the police," said Gabriel Enterino, father of Jovie, a 24-year-old graduate of an entrepreneurship course.

Big city

Argones said his daughter was about to join them in Manila, where he and his wife both worked in a garment factory, to continue her studies.

Kyla and her elder sister had been staying with their aunt in Tigaon, Camarines Sur.

"We decided to transfer them to Manila next school year so we would be together. We already made a reservation for her in one of the schools near our house on Blumentritt. But now, who am I going to enroll?" Argones said, holding back tears.

"Look at what they did to my girl? The accident smashed her head," he said.

Jovie's father said his eldest daughter was going to Manila for work.

"When she left, she was full of promises for us. She was very eager to help the family and send her other siblings to school," said Enterino, a tricycle driver.

Probe

Pagbilao police chief Supt. Joselito Conti said investigators were still double-checking the names of the fatalities.

Media reports showed that only one female casualty had remained unidentified.

A certain Berly San Joaquin, who arrived at the funeral parlor on Monday night to fetch the remains of one of the victims, identified the sixth fatality as her aunt, Visitacion Ollete, 53, of Lagonoy, Camarines Sur.

On Wednesday morning, Conti admitted that police were still trying to establish the identity of the driver.

He said the 21 injured passengers had already been released from the Jane County Hospital in Pagbilao.

About 40 passengers were still confined at the hospital, bringing the total number of injured to more than 60, not 50 as police reported earlier.

The victims' families said the bus company representative gave each victim P10,000.

"We insisted in the paper that we signed that the money was for financial assistance and not payment for the death of our relatives," Enterino stressed.

The relatives alleged that the bus was plying "out of line." But they said they continued to patronize the company due to lack of transportation.

"It is also peak season for travel. Everyone wants to go on with his travel schedule," said another relative.

Argones said he found the RJ Transit terminal near Malibay, Pasay City.

"After I introduced myself to one of the staff members in a small office that I was the father of one of the victims, she just instructed me to go to Lucena without further saying anything," he said.

Representative

Conti said the bus company representative, Rodel Diaz, had already met with the victims' families at the funeral parlor.

When contacted, Diaz introduced himself as the nephew of Roberto Diaz, who according to him, is the president of the family-owned firm based in Tabaco City in Albay.

He insisted that RJ Transit was not illegally plying the route. "We have all the necessary government permits to prove it," he said.

Diaz said he had already settled the problems of the victims' families.

He said the franchise document found in the wreckage was an old one. "We have the latest permit."

He said the company was included in an amnesty program of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board.

Later, it was learned from Conti that Rodel and Bobby were one and the same person.

News reports said LTFRB chair Ma. Elena Bautista had ordered the Land Transportation Office in Bicol to furnish the board a copy of the inspection report on the roadworthiness of all RJ Transit buses.

Bautista, however, noted that pending verification of the reports, the firm could not be suspended yet.

WHY THE TIDE HAS TURNED

In every village, town and province, the Filipino people have raised a collective voice that rings across the land with an unmistakable demand: it is time to amend the Constitution; it is time to change the structure of government and shift to a parliamentary system and a one-house Parliament. It is time to put an end to gridlock, fighting between senators and congressmen and between the Senate and Malacañang, which only a unicameral parliamentary system could cure; it is time to do away with coup attempts and destabilization, and dirty, destructive and poisonous politics.

Support for the People's Initiative to amend the Charter has jumped from 20 percent six months ago to 43 percent in recent weeks. *Sigaw ng Bayan* continues to gather the signatures of millions more of Filipinos who seek constitutional reform as the last hope of the nation.

Influential business organizations, major labor and civil society groups, and all the leagues of local officials nationwide have joined in this chorus for change!

Business backs initiative

MANILA STANDARD TODAY, THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2006

The **Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry** (PCCI),headed by Donald Dee, and the **Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry**, led by Francis Chua—both with a combined membership of 10 million workers and employees nationwide.

TUCP: Cha-cha will reinvigorate economy

THE PHILIPPINE STAR, SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2006

The **Trade Union Congress of the Philippines** (TUCP) with one million members—the largest, most respected labor union in the country, led by Democrito Mendoza.

Charter reform will trigger an inflow of foreign investments, which our country needs to build thousands of factories and millions of jobs—says **TUCP**'s Alexander Aguilar.

Labor leader urges Charter reforms to create more jobs

MANILA BULLETIN, SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2006

Protestant churches join people's initiative

MANILA BULLETIN, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2006

The **Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches** (PCEC) with 2 million adult members and 20,000 churches, headed by Bishop Efraim Tendero and Bishop Federico Magbanua.

"We see the people's initiative as a valid expression of the people," says Bishop Tendero, who feels Charter reform is highly relevant today.

SIGNATURE DRIVE FOR CHA-CHA
Ulap joins initiative petition

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2006

The **Union of Local Authorities of the Philipppines** (ULAP), with 1.8 million members and local government officials, headed by Gov. Erico Aumentado, composed of the following: **League of Provinces** (79 provinces), headed by Gov. Aumentado; **League of Cities** (115 cities), headed by City Mayor Jerry Trenas; **League of Municipalities** (1,500 towns), headed by Mayor Ramon Guico; **League of Board Members**; **League of Vice Mayors**; **League of Councilors** and **League of Barangay Councils** with their 1.7 million barangay officials, tanod, barangay health workers, councilmen, and lupong pampayapa.

☑ Ang Sigaw ng Bayan:
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Shame campaign vs gambling planned

By Christian V. Esguerra

A MAN FROM A REMOTE BARANGAY IN CENtral Luzon unwittingly placed a bet on "jueteng," the underground lottery so despised by the clergy in his area.

He didn't win the pot, but got an unenviable prize just the same: The infamy of having his name displayed at the local chapel, a "*sugalero*" (gambler).

A new movement formed by antigambling advocate, Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, is planning a similar shame campaign to discourage people from gambling, whether legal or illegal.

"We would like our chapters to come up with their own creative approach against gambling," he said yesterday in a press conference launching the Krusadang Bayan Laban sa Sugal.

The new group was the archbishop's way of keeping up with what he called the Arroyo administration's relentless promotion of "gambling culture" in the country.

It's an offshoot of the existing Krusadang Bayan Laban sa Jueteng, whose scope was apparently limited by the "metamorphosis" of jueteng into the Small Town Lottery (STL).

Cruz, arguably President Macapagal-Arroyo's toughest foe in the antigambling front, encouraged supporters of the new group to also employ the shame drive against lottery bettors.

He noted that the STL, a failed gambling project during the Aquino administration, was no different from "jueteng." It allegedly uses the same structure, system, manpower, and protectors of the multimillion-peso illegal numbers game.

Today, 95 percent of Regions 1 to 5 had either jueteng or STL operations, former gambling operator Wilfredo "Boy" Mayor, a member of the new group, said in the same press conference.

"The STL will eventually disappear to pave the way for the complete resurgence of jueteng," predicted Mayor, a former jueteng lord in Bicol who also had an experience with the STL in the late 1980s.

Oscar Orbos, a former Pangasinan governor now working with the antigambling movement, was not sold to the idea of the government serving both as "regulator and operator" of gambling in the country.

He said the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. should be abolished and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office limited to charity functions.

Besides Cruz, two other prelates had publicly condemned the STL.

Archbishop Paciano Aniceto of San Fernando, Pampanga had pointed out that even if the STL was legal, "not all legal is moral."

Balanga, Bataan Bishop Socrates Villegas had earlier said the game was an affront to the "heroism and holiness" of his province.

Indigenous people have little access to education

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—EDUcation is still not within the easy reach of members of nine indigenous tribes in Central Luzon, an official of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples in the region said.

About 13,665 of them, roughly 15 percent of the 91,102 indigenous peoples (IPs) of school age, managed to be enrolled last year, said Salong Sunggod, NCIP regional director.

Sunggod said poverty and little government funds made education less accessible to the young among the 200,000 IPs in Central Luzon.

They are composed of Aeta, Abelling, Dumagat, Remontado, Ibaloi, Kankanaey, Kalanguya and Ilongot peoples dispersed in Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales.

Survival basis

Most of them still live on a "survival basis" through agriculture, he said.

Dropout rates are high, especially among elementary students enrolled in public schools, ranging from 10 percent to 30 percent, he said.

While their poverty is due mainly to lack of permanent land tenure and insufficient farming tools and seeds, their limited assistance hinders many of them from getting an education, Sunggod said.

The money for the NCIP's educational assistance program in Central Luzon, for instance, had been taken from the "pork barrel" funds of a few legislators.

In 2004, only Representatives Eleuterio Violago (Nueva Ecija), Juan Miguel Arroyo (Pampanga), Jesli Lapus (Tarlac) and Milagros Magsaysay (Zambales) pitched in a total of P1.7 million, of which P637,500 was disbursed to the NCIP.

Beneficiaries

It supported a total of 457 IP students in elementary, high school and college. But the amount given to them ranged only from P1,000 to P10,000 per school year.

The program, began in 1999, has been extended to Aurora where 53 members of the Dumagat tribe were enrolled in college last year.

Of the 898 scholars who were enrolled in the program since 1999, at least 470 finished elementary, 362 completed high school, while 66 others obtained college degrees.

The EVA Charity Foundation Inc. has sent 28 children to school since 2004. It also operates nine literacy classes for 108 IP adults and out-of-school youth, and has trained nine literacy teachers chosen from among the tribes.

Infrastructure

The foundation has built six schools for almost 500 families, through the assistance of various foundations, donors and The Netherlands Embassy.

"If more public and private resources can be dedicated for the education of indigenous peoples, many of them can help their families and communities break the cycle of poverty," Sunggod said.

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

RICE RITUAL
Chanting the Ulallim (storytelling through songs) was featured in the recent Unoy Festival in Tinlayan, Kalinga. Kalinga folk chant the Ulallim to ease tiredness in pounding palay.

14 draw prison terms for illegal logging

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Fourteen people in Tarlac and Bulacan have been convicted of illegal logging and received prison terms, a report from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said on Tuesday.

Regidor de Leon, DENR executive director in Central Luzon, said 11 of the convicts were from Tarlac.

He identified them as Myrna and Maximo Rubino, Shane Anthony Albano, Larry Blanco, Nestor Pano, Danny Tabuli, Leonardo Raguingan, Emily Ulep, Rita Santos, Mariano Rabana and Cely Santiago.

Judge Arsenio Adriano, of the Tarlac regional trial court, found them guilty of violating Section 68 of the Revised Forestry Code, and of qualified theft under the Revised Penal Code. They were sentenced to 10-17 years in prison.

Their conviction came almost three years after they were arrested on Oct. 5, 2003 in Barangay Amacalan in Gerona town by a DENR forest protection team.

They were arrested as they boarded a truck loaded with 2,500 board feet of narra hidden in sacks of rice husks, the report said.

No documents accompanied the banned cargo worth P250,000.

In Bulacan, Judge Renato Francisco convicted Eugenio Salvador Tigas, Rodolfo Angeles and Celso Solargo Selgas to six years in prison for possession of illegally sawn lumber worth P12,000.

The convictions brought to 55 the number of resolved suits out of the 532 cases filed by the regional DENR since 1995.

De Leon asked local government officials and residents to pass information to authorities that would lead to the arrest of illegal loggers.

The Forestry Code, according to him, provides a reward equivalent to 20 percent of the proceeds of confiscated products. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

ROUNDUP

Market stalls face closure

MAY PERMIT KAMI!

DARAGA, Albay—More than 100 stalls at the public market here face closure for non-payment of rentals and failure to submit complete documents. On Monday, Mayor Jerry Jauclan ordered at least nine stalls closed. The closure prompted other stall owners here to "legitimize" their business by securing documents that had been required since January, like mayor's permit. Others were also pressed to pay their rent. *Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

2 hurt in Davao clash

DIGOS CITY—Two people, including a civilian, were injured when the Maritime police of Central Mindanao clashed with suspected pirates in Sarangani, Davao del Sur on April 22. Reports reaching the provincial police office here yesterday said the Maritime policemen were serving warrants of arrest against Warris Diamelon, Carlos Mongkil and two other suspects in connection with piracy charges when the clash occurred. Diamelon and the unidentified civilian were hit during the gunfight. Mongkil was later arrested, but two other suspects escaped. Piracy is a major problem in the coastal areas of Davao del Sur and nearby Sarangani province. A few weeks ago, pirates, known as Ambak Pare, also attacked a fishing boat off Jose Abad Santos, Davao del Sur and took P200,000 worth of fishing paraphernalia and the crew's personal belongings. *Eldie Aguirre, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Ex-vice gov dies in mishap

MALUNGON, Sarangani Province—Former vice governor Felipe Constantino died after his vehicle fell off a ravine in Sitio Buayan, Barangay Malandag on Tuesday night. Constantino managed to got out of his car and called his family for help. He was rescued an hour later and was rushed to the Socsargen County Hospital in nearby General Santos City where he died. Doctors said Constantino suffered fractured ribs, that pierced his lungs and caused internal hemorrhage. Archie Saguigit, grandson of the victim, said before the old man died, he told them he was on his way home after visiting his grandchildren when the steering wheel of his car locked. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Youth exec hunted

DIGOS CITY—Police here launched a manhunt for the village youth chair of Ruparan for allegedly stabbing to death a militiaman on April 23. Police said prior to the attack, Ruparan SK president Reynaldo Cerban had proposed the holding of a disco in their village but Rodrigo Arobo, 48, a member of the village's civilian volunteer organization, opposed it. Police investigator SPO2 Esdras de los Santos said Arobo opposed the disco because the proposed venue was near the house where the wake of a dead relative was being held. The event did not push through. De los Santos said on April 23, Arobo was talking with some friends at the wake when Cerban emerged and stabbed the militiaman in the chest. He fled after the stabbing while Arobo died while being rushed to a hospital. *Eldie Aguirre, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

I dead in Jolo blast

JOLO, Sulu—One man died while three others were injured when a grenade exploded inside a videoke bar in Barangay Asturias here on April 16. Jolo police chief Abdelnasser Sintahan said police believed the Abu Sayyaf was behind the blast that occurred at about 8:20 p.m. All the victims were customers of the videoke bar, he said. "We have no other suspect but the Abu Sayyaf," Sintahan said. The Abu Sayyaf opposes public singing and other forms of entertainment as it views these as against Islam. *Ed General, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

P78M for Digos road

DIGOS CITY—The city government has earmarked P78 million for the concreting of more roads here. Mayor Arsenio Latasa said the budget is not enough. "When we are through with this plan, we would focus on road development programs for other barangays, especially roads marked as vital links to the poblacion areas," Latasa said. He said the city government was also continuing with its annual release of P1 million per barangay to fund local development programs. *Eldie Aguirre, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Arms found in 'coprahan'

LUCENA CITY—Army soldiers on Monday recovered a rifle grenade, a hand grenade, a shotgun, two cal. 22 pistols and binoculars from a hut in Sitio Pulang Lupa, Barangay Bagumbayan, Paete, Laguna believed to be a secret depository of firearms of New People's Army rebels operating in the province. Army Maj. Jose Broso, spokesperson of the Southern Luzon Command, said. A military report said the hut also serve as "coprahan." *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

COPRAHAN PALA HA?

Town formed to return sultan dominion to Muslims

By Nash Maulana
PDI Mindanao Bureau

MIDSAYAP, NORTH COTABATO—Christian leaders of this town, one of Central Mindanao's oldest districts, vowed to return to Muslim control the traditional dominion of sultans that once hosted their ancestors.

A resolution passed by the municipal council endorsed the creation of the town of Sultan Tambilawan Bayao out of 11 Muslim-dominated barangays here.

The town was named after a Muslim ruler who reigned over the Cotabato Upriver Valley, the old kingdom of Rajah Buayan, in the late 19th century.

Mayor Romeo Araña said the council's decision to have a separate territory for Muslim residents came at the right time. Ancestral domain is one of the thorniest issues in the ongoing peace talks between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, he said.

The decision would boost the peace effort, according to Dr. Erlinda Santurias, president of the Southern Christian College.

The first set of the new town's officials will be appointed by Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno. But the sultan's surviving grandson will be crowned Sultan Dimasonsang Fernandez Tambilawan II.

He will be the town's titular head, according to Jo Fernandez, son of the incoming sultan.

"We, the Muslims among this coexisting community couldn't be more grateful to our Christian brethren and neighbors," said the younger Fernandez when a copy of Municipal Resolution 0132-05 was handed to him by local officials Friday last week.

"World War II saw the great divide in us with some Christians joining the pro-government Constable units, but many of them had unified with their Muslim brothers in the Army's anti-foreign control movement under then Lieutenants Salipada Pendatun and Manteel Dilangalen. But we know we have long buried that past and have started unifying again in our own time," Fernandez added.

Maguindanao Rep. Bai Zeny Dilangalen said she would sponsor a bill that would officially include the town in the country's list of municipal local government units. Her husband, former Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, is a descendant of Sultan Tambilawan.

The elder Tambilawan was the last sultan of the upriver kingdom of Rajah Buayan to enter into a truce with Spain.

His brother, Rajah Muda Datu Ali, led the anti-American Moro resistance and was killed by American forces in 1903.

On Wednesday, Christian and Muslim residents of Mamasapano, Maguindanao gathered in an unusual show of unity unseen in decades to pay their last respects to Muslim community leader Wadjid Dumpaw.

Christian residents said it was Dumpaw who provided them sanctuary at the height of the Moro rebellion in the 1970s. In return, they said, they provided him human shield when the Marcos military wanted to arrest and kill him.

The Christian residents said they had pooled modest contributions of all sorts to join hands with Muslims in the seventh-day offering for their leader who died of old age.

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BOC okays Binondo mall reopening

₱10 million in penalties collected

BINONDO'S most popular mall is back in business.

RAFFY LERMA

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE 168 SHOPPING MALL IN BINONDO, Manila, a favorite stop of many budget-conscious consumers, reopened yesterday, more than a month after Bureau of Customs personnel raided it on suspicion that most of its tenants had not paid taxes and duties on their imported merchandise.

Marius Aseron, head of the BOC's 168 One-Stop Shop office, said the bureau allowed the mall to resume operations after it had finished assessing the goods seized from the mall and stall owners had paid the corresponding penalties.

"The mall's management said that since we were almost finished with the assessment of goods there, they could open," Aseron added. "We allowed the resumption of operations for most of the stalls whose owners have paid the penalties."

The BOC had barred traders from opening their stalls at the 168 Mall while their goods were being assessed by customs agents for tax purposes. As of noon yesterday, some stalls had already opened, but most remained closed.

The BOC said it was able to collect P10 million in penalties from stall owners although Aseron said he expected the collection to go up since the amount represented just 30 percent of the items in the mall that the bureau had placed in its custody.

"There are still more items in our warehouse that have yet to be assessed," Aseron said. The taxed items represent the goods that were not taken out of the mall after the BOC set up the One-Stop Shop Office to speed up the assessment of goods and the payment of penalties.

The BOC raided the mall in March after a complaint from the Philippine Retailers Association about unfair trade practices.

During the raid, BOC personnel asked stall owners for proof that they had paid taxes and duties on the imported goods they were selling. The bureau seized the merchandise of those who were unable to present proof.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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- **3 men arrested for selling fake US bonds** /A20
- **'Pink cloth' traffic scheme takes off** /A20

OVERSTAYING
NA BUS NA ITO.
SUMUNOD NA BUS
SUMAKAY.
MMDA

Realtor under investigation for occupying prime lot

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE OWNER OF A REAL ESTATE COMPANY who claims to be a direct descendant of Rajah Soliman and Lapu-Lapu is now under investigation for allegedly taking over unoccupied lots in Metro Manila using a spurious court document.

Agents of the National Bureau of Investigation on Tuesday afternoon raided a prime lot at the corner of Buendia Avenue and Roxas Boulevard after the Tala Estate Realty Company, owned by Julian Tallano, illegally occupied the property owned by Annie Montinola del Rosario.

NBI National Capital Region (NCR) executive officer Ferdinand Lavin said Del Rosario had sought the bureau's help when she noticed four watchmen patrolling her lot.

Investigation showed that the guards began occupying the lot on April 12, after officers of Tala Estate ordered them to put up a notice that the 3,000-sq. m. property belonged to their company.

Ownership

"Their claim stemmed from a court decision favoring Tallano's case in 1991, wherein he declared ownership of lands owned by affluent families like the Ayalas and Aranetas," Lavin said.

Lavin was referring to a decision handed down by Pasay Regional Trial Court Judge Sofronio Sayo in favor of Tallano, who claimed that he was a prince as he was allegedly a descendant of a certain King Luisong Tagean whose sons included native chieftains Rajah Soliman and Lapu-Lapu.

However, the Court of Appeals issued a writ of preliminary injunction in 2001, ordering the Pasay court to maintain the status quo after the Office of the Solicitor General sought to nullify Sayo's decision.

"Despite the CA order, the suspects used a writ of execution allegedly issued by Judge Sayo, ordering all parties concerned to allow the takeover of the lands in question," Lavin said.

No writ

A check with the Pasay RTC clerk of court, however, showed that Sayo had not issued a writ of execution, Lavin added.

The NBI official said that the Manila Police District had earlier raided a lot in Manila owned by the Manotok family, after the same group allegedly occupied the property last March.

"Another complainant from Antipolo City also called us and sought our help after we conducted operations on the Montinola-owned lot," Lavin said.

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'Pink Cloth' traffic scheme takes off

MMDA expects improvements in 1 week

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA Development Authority expects vehicular flow to ease up on Edsa—particularly in the Cubao area—in about a week's time after it began implementing its "Pink Cloth" traffic scheme yesterday.

MMDA Traffic Operations Center Executive Director Angelito Vergel de Dios yesterday predicted that there would be less traffic buildup along the thoroughfare as commuters and bus drivers get used to the agency's newest campaign to instill discipline among bus drivers.

"We are sure traffic will improve because bus drivers will be forced to leave the bus stop with the pink cloth blocking their doors. If they can no longer take in passengers, they will surely move," Vergel de Dios said. "We may be able to see that within a week."

The "Pink Cloth" scheme is aimed at discouraging bus drivers from hogging loading points for passengers. A brainchild of MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, the campaign complements the agency's Organized Bus Route scheme, a program that limits the number of buses out on the road based on commuter volume at a given time.

The "Pink Cloth" scheme arms MMDA traffic enforcers with a pink cloth attached to an aluminum pole. Once a bus driver exceeds the time allotment given for him to stay at the loading point, the traffic enforcer will raise the pink cloth in front of the bus door to prevent more passengers from boarding.

The MMDA will implement the traffic scheme next time on both sides of Edsa on North Avenue, the southbound portion of Edsa at the corner of Ayala Avenue and Edsa near the Magallanes Interchange.

Vergel de Dios said drivers who refuse to leave the loading point even after traffic enforcers have raised the pink cloth would be fined P150 for the first offense, P300 for the second offense and the confiscation of their license on the third offense.

Indiscipline at the Bureau of Customs

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

IF THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS IS TO BE in tip-top form, it should be rid not only of corrupt officials but also of misfits.

There is no room for thieving and inept officials in the second major revenue collection agency of the government. Among the misfits are officials who fall short in their collection target. The worst thing that could happen to the customs bureau is for these inept officials to stick to their positions like glue when they've been given their walking papers. Their insubordination becomes a model for other inept officials and employees to follow. Can you imagine a government agency where there is no order and discipline, where the subordinates don't respect their superiors?

Such is the case being presented to the public by Cebu Port Customs Collector Lourdes Mangaoang and Manila International Container Port Collector Ricardo So. They've been ordered to vacate their posts for inefficiency. But Mangaoang and So refuse to vacate their positions. One allegedly invokes her connection with a Finance Department official; the other his affiliation with an influential religious sect.

From Jan. 1 to April 22 this year, Mangaoang had a shortfall of P2.4 billion in collections. So had a P2.3-billion deficit for the same period.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales wants Mangaoang and So replaced so he could comply with the President's order for him to cover the national government deficit.

But how can Morales be effective when he's burdened with the problem of inefficient and, worse, disobedient subordinates? Mangaoang points to Finance Secretary Margarito Teves as the one who reportedly tells her to stay on. So invokes the Iglesia ni Cristo as if the church is the invisible government.

Collectors who have not met their targets are now running to their backers so they could be retained in their positions in the current customs reshuffle. If Mangaoang and So can be retained, why can't they?

THE NEC mini-park has tree-lined walkways, picnic groves, a gazebo and an eco-trail. RAFFY LERMA

Eco-fair at QC green haven

By Jocelyn P. Dimaculangan

PICNICKERS AND NATURE LOVERS CAN now add another entry to the growing list of green havens in Quezon City—the National Ecology Center mini-park.

The NEC mini-park, situated in front of the Philippine Heart Center for Asia along East Avenue, covers 4.5 hectares. The sprawling grounds has picnic groves and walkways that are lined with indigenous and endemic tree species such as yakal, kamagong, narra and katmon.

It is open to the public seven days a week, free of charge. The park is maintained by the Urban Forestry Division of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region.

"We plan to put up an aviary in the area as well as build offices for the Environmental Management Bureau and the DENR-NCR," Carlos Gubat I, Urban Forestry Division chief, said.

On Friday and Saturday, the park will host a fair dubbed "Samu't-Sari 2006" (An Eco-Market for Eco-Friendly Products) which will feature organic produce, health products and indigenous local items for sale. Local inventors will also display the latest green technology during the fair .

These include the nutrient film technique in which plants are grown hydroponically or in a soil-less and pesticide-free farming technology. The soil-less and pesticide-free farming technology reportedly produces vegetables that grow at a much-faster rate compared with those planted in soil.

METROBRIEFS

Fake US bonds

WALANG KAKAGAT DYAN!

QUEZON City police yesterday presented three men suspected of peddling fake US federal reserves and treasury bonds to tourists and antique collectors. Benjamin Tan, 74, Jesus Cruz, 68, and Sharrif Ibrahim Albani, 38, were arrested on Tuesday during a buy-bust operation conducted by agents of the District Intelligence and Investigation Division led by Supt. David Allauigan. Working on a tip from an informant, police set up an operation against the three using an undercover agent who posed as a buyer at Aberdeen Court Hotel on Quezon Avenue. Seized from the suspects were 13 bronze slides of suspected fake federal reserves with a face value of $3 trillion and bearing "Treaty of Versailles" markings.

DJ Yap

Fire hits shanties in Makati

FIRE struck a residential area in Makati City yesterday, destroying P1 million worth of property. The fire began at 12:05 p.m. in a row of shanties at the corner of Cervera and Mola Streets, near the Pablo Ocampo Sr. Extension. Chief Inspector Rogelio Bucayu of the city's Bureau of Fire Protection office said the blaze started in the house of Antonio Regio. It then quickly spread to nine other shanties, and the third floor of an adjacent four-story residential building, before it was put out nearly three hours later.

Tarra V. Quismundo

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INVITATION TO BID
(Re-bidding)

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), will conduct a public bidding for the per kilo/lot sale and disposal of the following surplus materials and various unserviceable equipment and furniture, on an "as is-where is basis", located at the San Juan Stockyard, San Juan, Metro Manila and at the MWSS Property Management Storage, Balara, Quezon City. These materials are composed of the following:

Item No.	Materials Description	Location	Approximate Quantity	MWSS Base Price
1.	Surplus project materials composed of different kinds of pipes and fittings	San Juan Stockyard, San Juan, M.M.	2,000,000 kilos	P12.00/kilo
2.	Heavy/Solid Metal	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	15,000 kilos	P10.83/kilo
3.	Tin Sheet Scrap Metal (Yero)	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	2,000 kilos	P7.16/kilo
4.	Scrap Kitchen Fixtures, Stainless	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	500 kilos	P63.66/kilo
5.	Aluminum Metal	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	500 kilos	P61.66/kilo
6.	Scrap Brass (Tansong Dilaw)	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	7,500 kilos	P104.66/kilo
7.	Unserviceable Computers, Printers, Xerox Machines, Electronic Communication Equipment and Accessories	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	1,580 kilos	P8.00/kilo
8.	Scrap/Waste Assorted Papers	MWSS Complex Balara, Q.C.	5,000 kilos	P2.00/kilo
9.	White Scrap Papers (obsolete continues form, 5 ply 14" x 9½")	MWSS Complex Balara, Q.C.	1 lot	P88,931.06 (1 lot)
10.	Office Desks, Tables, Cabinets, and other Wooden Furnitures	MWSS Complex Balara, Q.C.	1 lot	P15,000.00 (1 lot)
11.	THW Electrical Cable & PVC Insulation	MWSS Complex, Balara, Q.C.	386 kilos	P176.30/kilo

Interested parties may secure the Terms of Reference (TOR) and the Bid Form from the MWSS Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), located at the address below, upon payment of non-refundable amount of Php1,000.00, starting May 02 until May 12, 2006:

Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)
Engineering & Project Management Department
Ground Floor, MWSS Complex
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City
Telefax: 929-6988 / 922-2568

The bids must be submitted to the BAC in sealed envelope, one (1) original and two (2) duplicate copies, on or before **2:00 p.m. of May 24, 2006**. The bundy clock located at the above address shall serve as the basis for the official time for this bidding. Bids received after the above deadline shall no longer be accepted. The bids will be opened by the BAC at 2:15 p.m. on the same date in the presence of and the bidders, or their duly authorized representatives, and the general public.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be conducted at the above address, at **10:00 a.m.** on **May 17, 2006**, and thereafter a joint site inspection will follow.

(Sgd.) ORLANDO C. HONDRADE
Administrator

(PDI - April 27 & May 4, 2006)

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Zarqawi vows to defeat US in Internet video

PARIS—AL-QAIDA'S FEARED Iraq frontman Abu Musab al-Zarqawi vowed to defeat the United States in a website video Tuesday, in a rare public appearance by one of the world's most wanted militants.

ZARQAWI AFP

"By God, America will be defeated in Iraq," the man identified as Zarqawi warned in the video message.

"America will be chased out of the Land of Two Rivers defeated and humiliated," he vowed.

The video appeared just two days after a new audiotape recording of Osama bin Laden surfaced, in which al-Qaida's founder accused the West of waging war against Islam.

It also came as Iraq named Shiite politician Jawad al-Maliki its designate prime minister in a bid to quickly form a national unity government and end the country's violence.

"Beware those of you who join these collaborator agencies—the (Iraqi) army and police. By God, all they will get from us is a sharp sword, and we will have ... battles that will turn children's hair white," the man said, in a warning to Iraqis.

The shadowy Jordanian-born Zarqawi, who is blamed for numerous large-scale attacks during the insurgency in Iraq since the toppling of Saddam Hussein in 2003, has taken a low profile in recent months. The US military has claimed it has captured a number of his top aides, raising speculation about whether the noose was finally tightening on Iraq's enemy number one. *AFP*

Thai king asks courts to resolve political crisis

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S TOP THREE judges will meet this week to consider nullifying this month's elections, after a rare demand from the king for the courts to resolve months of political turmoil, a court spokesperson said Wednesday.

The chief justices of the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court, and the Supreme Administrative Court will meet Friday to consider whether to nullify the election or to clear the way for parliament to convene, spokesperson Charan Pakdithanakul told AFP.

"There is a pressing need for the court to take action," Charan told AFP.

Thailand has been mired in political crisis after an opposition boycott of April 2 elections coupled with weeks of street protests forced prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra to step aside.

Parliament cannot legally convene to form a new government until all 500 seats are filled, but after two rounds of voting, 14 seats remain empty because of the opposition boycott.

A third round of voting in southern Thailand is slated for Saturday to try to fill them.

"If the election is voided, a new election date will have to be decided. If it is not nullified, the justices will decide what to do if parliament lacks a quorum of 500 seats," Charan told local radio earlier.

All 87 justices on the Supreme Court will meet Thursday to try to take a common position before the nation's three top judges meet, he added.

The court's announcement came the morning after the king spoke to the Supreme Court justices in his palace, urging them to find a way to resolve the crisis and ensure parliament can open.

He called the April 2 elections "undemocratic," but insisted he would not appoint a new prime minister as the opposition have asked.

The leading opposition party said Wednesday they were ready to run in new elections.

"The Democrat Party will heed the royal remarks and is willing to cooperate with courts to solve the impasse," party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva said.

"If cooperation means new elections, the Democrats are ready to run," he said.

Acting prime minister Chidchai Vanasathidya said the ruling Thai Rak Thai party viewed the remarks as a call for national reconciliation.

"The situation should get better after the king's address," he said, while declining to speculate about whether the courts would invalidate the election.

But the leader of the protests that helped drive Thaksin from office insisted that the monarch should name a new prime minister.

"We still adhere to our original demands, that the election was unjust and undemocratic," media tycoon Sondhi Limthongkul told reporters.

"Outgoing prime minister Thaksin and his government must resign to pave the way for a neutral prime minister, appointed by the king, to supervise new elections," he said.

Sondhi also insisted that his People's Alliance for Democracy would rally on May 2 in Bangkok. Mass anti-Thaksin protests have been held in the capital accusing the billionaire businessman turned politician of abuse of power and cronyism. *AFP*

Bush orders probe of sky-high gasoline prices

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush on Tuesday ordered an investigation into possible manipulation of prices at gasoline stations and suspended deposits into America's strategic oil reserves, as the US government tried to rein in record-high fuel costs.

"One immediate way we can signal to people we're serious about increasing supply is to stop making purchases or deposits to the strategic supply for a short time," Bush said in a wide-ranging speech on strategies to combat skyrocketing fuel prices.

"The strategic reserve is large enough to guard against any major supply disruption over the next few months.

"By deferring deposits until the fall, we'll leave a little more oil on the market. Every little bit helps," the US president said.

In remarks to the Renewable Fuels Association, one of the chief backers of ethanol and other alternatives to petroleum-based fuels, Bush unveiled a multi-pronged attack on escalating oil prices, including increased conservation, expanding domestic production and developing alternative sources of energy.

He also said the Federal Trade Commission was investigating whether "the price of gasoline has been unfairly manipulated in any way." In addition, the president called on oil companies to give up billions of dollars' worth of tax breaks.

Bush acknowledged that the spike in gasoline prices has been felt clear across American society, hurting consumers and putting a damper on business.

"Gasoline price increases are like a hidden tax on the working people. They're like a tax on our farmers. They're like a tax on small businesses," Bush said.

"Energy experts predict gas prices are going to remain high throughout the summer. And that's going to be a continued strain on the American people." Bush vowed that, with the measures announced Tuesday, he would "make sure that the American consumers are treated fairly at the gas pump." He added that, with oil prices at record levels, energy companies do not need all of the tax breaks they now get, and proposed eradicating two billion dollars of tax write-offs over the next decade.

Bush said he decided to temporarily halt deposits to the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve to make more oil available for consumer needs. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Sri Lanka attacks Tamil rebels

COLOMBO—The Sri Lankan government launched strikes on Tamil Tiger rebels Tuesday in retaliation for a failed assassination attempt that left at least 10 people dead and risked returning the country to war. Air and naval attacks were carried out against a cluster of boats of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and their land bases within the northeastern district of Trincomalee, the defense ministry said in a statement. There were no immediate reports of casualties. The strikes were ordered after a female suicide bomber blew herself up at army headquarters in Colombo killing 10, seriously wounding intended target army chief Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka, and injuring 30 others. *AFP*

Koizumi marks 5 years in office

TOKYO—Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi marked five years in office Wednesday as one of the country's longest-serving postwar leaders, urging his eventual successor to press ahead with his reform program. Koizumi, who took office in April 2001, has presided over major changes in Japan during his tenure, including an economic resurgence after a decade of malaise, and the groundbreaking dispatch of military forces to Iraq. "Five years have passed before I knew it," Koizumi told an upper house committee meeting. "We need to create a solid safety net and social security to prepare for the aging society. We also need to invest in people in science and technology." *AP*

UN deploys EU troops to DRCongo

UNITED NATIONS—The UN Security Council on Tuesday unanimously endorsed a resolution authorizing the deployment of some 1,250 European Union troops to help the United Nations oversee upcoming polls in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The 15-member council endorsed the deployment of the force "for a period ending four months after the date of the first round of the presidential and parliamentary elections" in the vast central African country. The EU force will be tasked with supporting the 17,000-strong UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC known as MONUC during the period encompassing the elections. Of the 1,250-strong force, EU leaders plan to send 400 to 450 troops to the DRC and to keep a further 800 rapidly-deployable troops on standby outside the country. *AFP*

Republic of the Philippines
CITY OF BAIS
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Bais invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply and delivery of the hereunder requirements:

ITEM		APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC)
1) P.R. No. 271-06	– Various construction materials for Rehabilitation of City Hall Annex Building, Bais City, (Phase I) to be taken from the 20% Development Fund	P2,055,685.00

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

In order to qualify, bidders should conform to the eligibility criteria as prescribed under Sec. 23.11 of the IRR-A of R.A. 9184.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary documents will result in the disqualification of the bidder.

All other particulars relative to the procurement process shall be govern by the implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.

Pre-bid conference will be conducted at the Office of the City Mayor, this city, on **May 2, 2006 at 1:30 P.M.**

Bid documents can be obtained upon payment of a non-refundable fee equivalent to the total amount of the ABC of the items in which interested bidders intend to bid, in accordance with the following rates:

Below P50,000.00	– 0.5% but not less than P100.00
P50,000 but not more than P100,000.00	– 0.45% but not less than P250.00
P100,001.00 but not more than P200,000.00	– 0.4% but not less than P450.00
P200,001.00 – P350,000.00	– 0.35% but not less than P800.00
P350,001.00 – P500,000.00	- 0.3% but not less than P1,225.00
P500,001.00 – P1,000,000.00	– 0.2% but not less than P1,500.00
P1,000,001.00 & above	- 0.1% but not less than P2,000.00 and not more than P10,000.00

Bid documents can be obtained starting April 27, 2006 at the BAC Secretariat c/o Office of the City Mayor or Office of the City General Services, this city, Tel. No. (035) 402-3182, or 402-8115 anytime during office hours, and can also be inquired for further information or particulars.

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility, technical and financial documents each in separate sealed envelopes duly marked as such in the bid box at the Conference Room at the Office of the City Mayor on **May 15, 2006 at 1:30 P.M.** at which place, date and time said envelopes shall be opened in the presence of the members of the BAC, the attending bidders, the observers, or their duly authorized representative. Late bids shall not be accepted.

The City Government of Bais reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **CARMELINO L. MORALES**
BAC Chairman

(PDI–April 21 & 27, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of South Cotabato
Municipality of Tupi

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Tupi through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites suppliers of Heavy Equipment to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Equipment : 1 unit Brand new wheel type Excavator, Air con cab and Computerized panel board.

Brief Description Specifications

Engine: 100-110 HP@2200 RPM, direct injection, water cooled, turbo charged, 4 cylinder
Bucket capacity : 0.9-1.0 cu.m.
Min. Arm Length (Run): 2.1 m.
Operating weight: 12,000 – 14,000 kgs.
Max. Digging Reach: 7.5 – 8.5 m
Max. Digging Depth: 4.5 – 5.0 m
Max. Digging Height. 8.5 – 9.0 m
Bucket Digging Force: 8,000 – 9,000 kgs.
Arm Crowd Force: 6,500 – 7,500 kgs.
Wheel Base: 2.5 – 2.8 m.
Tires: 8 pcs. 10 x 20, 14 ply rating
Travel Speed (Max.): 30 KPH
With: Front dozer blade, Rear outrigger, Standard tools & operation manuals
A.B.C.: P11,800,000.00

Prospective bidders should have key personnel and available spare parts listed in the Eligibility forms available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use nondiscretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars related to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provision of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Schedule of Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) activities are as follows:

1. Receipt from prospective bidders of letter of intent (LOI) including application for eligibility.	May 2, 2006
2. Issuance of eligibility requirements	May 2, 2006
3. Receipt of eligibility requirements	May 8, 2006
4. Notice of results of eligibility check	May 15, 2006
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 22, 2006
6. Pre-bid conference	May 22, 2006
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	May 29, 2006

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders eligibility forms at Municipal Hall upon their submission of LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable fee of P150.00 to the Office of the Municipal Treasurer. Prospective bidders shall submit the eligibility requirements at the said address. They may also obtain results of the eligibility check at the same address.

The BAC will issue bidding documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible upon payment of non-refundable amount of P5,000 to the Office of the Municipal Treasurer.

The Municipality of Tupi assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses occurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **EUGENIO S. JUELE, JR.**
Municipal Engineer
BAC Chairman

(PDI–April 20 & 27, 2006)

Republika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City
Telefax : 636-6543
Direct Line: 633-93-43
Trunk Line: 632-13-61 locals 2094
Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph

April 18, 2006

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Request for Proposals (RFP) to undertake the following packages:

Package 1 . Revision of SEDP Textbooks and Teacher's Manual for the Non-Core Subjects in Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) and Values Education (VE)
Package 2 Development of Teacher's Professional Development Manuals (TPDM)

1. The Republic of the Philippines through the Department of Education (DepED) has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the costs of the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP), and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payments under the contracts for the above mentioned packages.
2. The DepED now invites your firm to submit Technical and Financial Proposals to provide the services required in the Terms of Reference of the RFP for the said Packages 1 and 2.
3. The negotiation shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures described in this RFP. The RFP includes the following documents:
   - Section 1 — Letter of Invitation
   - Section 2 — Information to Consultants
   - Section 3 — Technical Proposal – Standard Forms
   - Section 4 — Financial Proposal – Standard Forms
   - Section 5 — Terms of Reference
   - Section 6 — Standard Form of Contract
4. Please submit in writing on or before April 28, 2006 your expression of interest to accept the project to the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), c/o Procurement Service, Rm. 508, 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City. Interested service providers may secure the complete set of RFP from DepED Procurement Service at same address upon payment of Php 200.00 in cash.
5. A Pre-Proposal Conference shall be held on May 8, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the BSE Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Bonifacio Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.
6. Submission of Technical and Financial Proposals shall be on or before May 31, 2006, 5:00 p.m. to the address indicated in paragraph no. 4.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,
(Sgd.) **ATTY. CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA**
Assistant Secretary and BAC Chairperson

(PDI – April 20 & 27, 2006)

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
Room 508, 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City
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Direct Line: 633-93-43
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Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph

Call for Submission of Textbooks and Teacher's Manuals

The Department of Education is inviting interested publishers to submit copies of camera-ready materials of their textbooks and accompanying teacher's manuals for **Filipino** Grades 1 to 6 and First to Fourth Year high school intended for use in public schools nationwide starting SY 2008-2009.

All submitted materials will undergo an evaluation process in four levels:

- Level 1 to test completeness of coverage, organization, and internal consistency;
- Level 2 to check accuracy of facts and information, integrity of concepts, and sequence of learning concepts;
- Level 3 to test the appropriateness of the language and visuals used; and
- Level 4 to ensure correct grammar and syntax

The evaluation result will either be for Major Revision or Minor Revision. Content evaluation will NOT be on a Pass/Fail basis and therefore does not constitute pre-qualification.

Publishers will pay an evaluation fee of **thirty thousand pesos (P30,000)** for each set of textbook and teacher's manual for Grades 1 to 2 and **forty thousand pesos (P40,000)** for each set of textbook and teacher's manual for Grades 3 to 6 and First to Fourth Year. The evaluation fees, which will be used to defray expenses for service fees, transportation, and board and lodging of evaluators, may be paid either in cash or manager's check addressed to DepED-IMCS Acct. No. LBP 0672-1027-66. Payments must be made at the DepED Cash Division, 1st Floor, Rizal Building II, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.

Publishers will be given a copy of the recommendations of the evaluators at the different levels which will serve as basis for revising the materials prior to submission for bidding. All materials – even those requiring major revisions – may be submitted when bids are tendered as scheduled. Content evaluation under the bidding will then determine the completeness and accuracy of the implementation of the revisions for those recommended for minor revisions. For those recommended for major revisions, the materials will undergo the four levels of evaluation.

The materials for Filipino should be submitted to the DepEd-Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS), 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City starting **September 11, 2006 but not later than September 15, 2006.**

In order to get a soft copy of the Learning Competencies and the Textbook Call Guidelines, bring a blank compact disk to the DepEd-IMCS starting May 8, 2006. For more information, please contact Ms. Daisy O. Santos or Ms. Nonie Barraquias at 634-1054 or 631-9294.

For your information and guidance.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA**
Assistant Secretary and BAC Chair

(PDI–April 20 & 27, 2006)

Republika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
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PROCUREMENT SERVICE
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Telefax: 636-65-42
Direct Line. 636-65-43
Trunk Line: 632-13-61 local 2115
Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph

Call for Submission of Textbooks and Teacher's Manuals

The Department of Education is inviting interested publishers to submit copies of camera-ready materials for their textbooks (TXs) and accompanying teacher's manuals (TMs) for English Grades 1 to 6 and First to Fourth Year high school intended for use in public schools nationwide starting SY 2007-2008.

This call does not constitute a pre-bid content evaluation. DepED intends to buy the best sets of materials that pass content evaluation with a reasonable price-offer for the royalty fee or copyright authorization fee to print and distribute to all public schools nationwide.

All submitted materials will undergo an evaluation process in four levels:

- Level 1 to test completeness of coverage, organization, and internal consistency;
- Level 2 to check accuracy of facts and information, integrity of concepts, and sequence of learning concepts;
- Level 3 to test the appropriateness of the language and visuals used; and
- Level 4 to ensure correct grammar and syntax

Content evaluation will be on a Pass/Fail basis. Only those that pass content evaluation in the four levels will be considered for ranking. The ranks 1 to 3 titles will be recommended for negotiation for the royalty fee or copyright authorization fee that would allow DepED to print and distribute to all public schools nationwide.

Publishers will pay an evaluation fee of **thirty thousand pesos (P30,000)** for each set of TX and TM for Grades 1 to 2 and **forty thousand pesos (P40,000)** for, each set for Grades 3 to 6 and First to Fourth Year. The evaluation fees, which will be used to defray expenses for service fees, transportation, and board and lodging of evaluators, committee members, and facilitators, may be paid either in cash or manager's check addressed to DepED-IMCS Acct. No. LBP 0672-1027-66. Payments must be made at the DepED Cash Division, 1st Floor, Rizal Building II, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.

The English TXs and TMs should be submitted to the Dep-ED-Procurement Service (PS) at 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City starting **May 8, 2006 but not later than May 12, 2006.**

In order to get a soft copy of the Learning Competencies and the Textbook Call Guidelines, bring a blank compact disk to the DepED-IMCS starting April 20, 2006. All inquiries pertaining to this call may be addressed to DepED-IMCS staff at tel. nos. 634-1054 or 631-9294.

For your information and guidance.

(Sgd.) Atty. **CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA**
Assistant Secretary & BAC Chairman

(PDI–April 20 & 27, 2006)

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Egypt arrests 30 suspects in resort blasts

CAIRO—EGYPTIAN SECURITY FORCES HAVE arrested some 30 suspects over the triple bombings at the Red Sea resort of Dahab that left at least 18 people dead, an interior ministry source said Wednesday.

Security sources said the suspects had been rounded up since the explosions rocked the resort on Monday as it was packed with foreign tourists and Egyptians enjoying a traditional spring holiday.

The suspects, most of them bedouins from the Sinai, were being interrogated in connection with Monday's bombings, the third attack on the peninsula's resorts in 18 months, the source added.

Health and security officials said 12 Egyptians and six foreigners were killed.

'Initial investigations suggested the three almost simultaneous explosions were caused by suicide bombers who concealed their explosives in leather bags, the state-owned Al-Ahram daily reported.

The newspaper said investigators were running DNA tests to match body parts with identity papers bearing the name of Eid Atta Suleiman—a Bedouin from northern Sinai—which were found on the scene of one of the explosions.

Investigators also retrieved other body parts from the sea which they believe may belong to the suicide bombers.

Security sources said the investigators believe that the Dahab bombings are connected to two previous waves of bombings along the Sinai coast.

The government accuses a group called Tawhid wal Jihad (Unification and holy war) of carrying out the July 2005 Sharm el-Sheikh attacks that killed some 70 people and multiple bombings further up the coast that left 34 people dead in October 2004.

Security officials had said Tuesday that three of the those detained in Dahab were Egyptian computer engineers carrying fake papers who arrived in the resort on Sunday and left an hour after the attacks.

"Mumen Faruk Mohammed, Ali Karim Ashraf Abdallah and Majed Ali Mahmud arrived in Dahab in a car whose number plate had changed by the time they left," one source said.

President Hosni Mubarak, who visited the victims in hospital on Tuesday, vowed to track down and punish those responsible for the bombings.

The Dahab attacks came a day before Sinai Liberation Day, a public holiday which celebrates Israel's 1982 withdrawal from the peninsula, in what many analysts saw as evidence that the perpetrators were from a local group with an Egyptian agenda. *AFP*

Ex-premier set to head new Nepal gov't

KATMANDU—GIRIJA PRASAD KOIRALA, the grand old man of Nepali politics set to become its new premier, is part of a family dynasty that has fought for democracy in Nepal for more than 50 years.

KOIRALA REUTERS

Koirala has led the country through some of its biggest upheavals and been implicated in the feuding and claims of corruption that have frequently rocked public life.

Koirala, 81, reportedly an unwilling candidate, takes charge of the job for the fourth time after a series of premierships marked by a deadly Maoist insurgency and a palace massacre.

One of three brothers to hold the top job, he was in charge at the time of the mountainous nation's most notorious upset when 10 members of the royal family, including the king and queen, were shot dead during the crown prince's drunken rampage.

The position of Koirala, the leader of the kingdom's largest party the Nepali Congress, was shaky at the time of the massacre and he had nearly resigned over a corruption probe.

He subsequently handed his resignation to the man who took over the throne, King Gyanendra, after a row when the new monarch began taking control of the army and political parties.

But as Gyanendra was this week forced to hand back to the politicians the total rule he snatched 14 months ago, Koirala will again move to Nepal's political center stage for what is likely to be the last time.

Born in 1925, he is the younger brother of B.P. Koirala who fought the century-old system of hereditary premiers in Nepal and became Nepal's first elected premier in 1959-60. *AFP*

Israel deploys spy satellite to Iran

JERUSALEM—ISRAEL PUT A NEW OBSERVATION satellite into service from Russia on Tuesday which will increase the levels of surveillance of Iran's nuclear program.

The satellite was launched from a military space launch site in Russia's far eastern Amur region aboard a Topol solid-fuel rocket booster, the ITAR-TASS news agency said, quoting a spokesperson for the facility, Alexei Kuznetsov.

In a brief item posted on its website, the Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot quoted an unnamed defence official as saying the satellite would be used to spy on Iran's nuclear activities.

ITAR-TASS said the satellite is fitted with a powerful camera "which will permit Israeli intelligence to observe important Iranian targets in the most minute detail." The D33 Eros B1 satellite was successfully placed into orbit about 20 minutes after its launch, the agency said.

The satellite was launched by ImageSat, a company that is part-owned by state-run Israel Aircraft Industries.

ImageSat said the 280 kg satellite is able to spot objects of no more than 70 cm long.

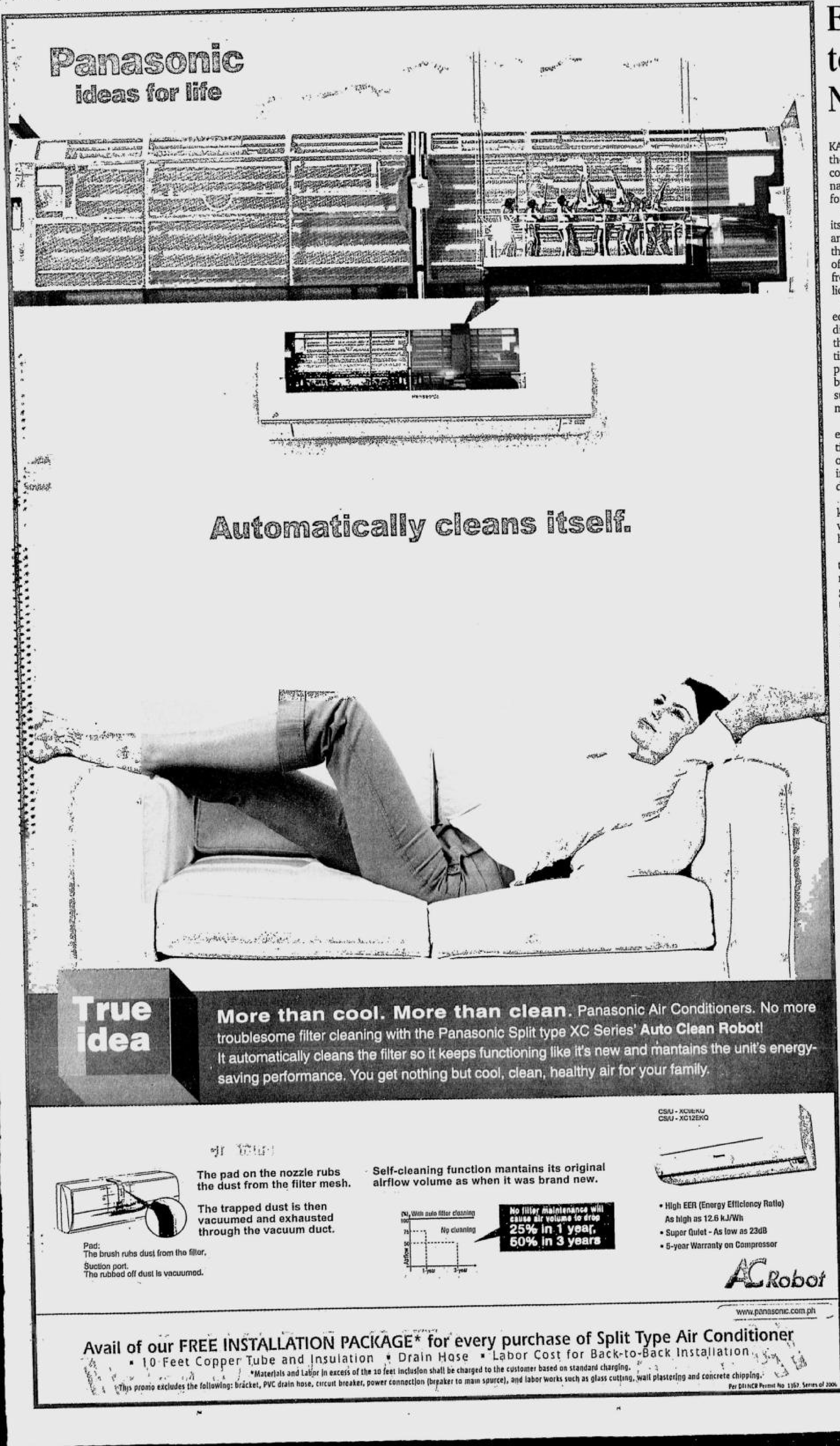
"As soon as this satellite goes into orbit, it will place us in the major leagues of countries with photography satellites," ImageSat director general Shimon Eckhaus told Yediot Aharonot.

The Eros B is an upgraded versions of the Eros A satellite which is already in operation.

Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz hailed the successful satellite launch as "a great achievement of the defense establishment, the defense industries and Israel." "The satellite activity will increase Israel's ability to collect high-quality intelligence at great distances from Israel's borders," he said in a statement.

"Israel has shown that it relies first and foremost on itself for protecting its citizens," he said.

Israeli Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said this week that Iran represented an existential threat to the survival of the Jewish state. *AFP*



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Per DTI NCR Permit No 1167. Series of 2006

SPORTS

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EZ2 13 23

SUERTRES 6 0 2 (In exact order)

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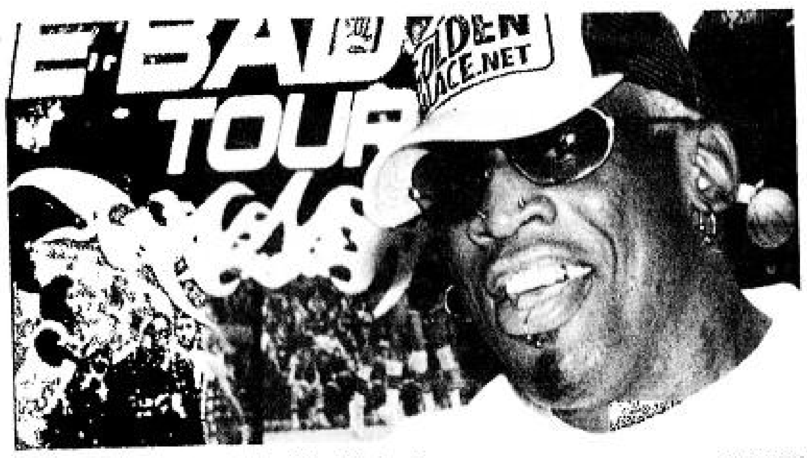
'We'll entertain or we're bad'

By Jasmine Payo



RODMAN: the original "Bad Boy" is back.

ERIK ARAZAS

NBA LEGEND AND NOTORIOUS BAD boy Dennis Rodman apparently has a soft spot in his heart.

As the tight security brushed off fans as he walked out of the well-timed, almost scripted press conference, Rodman went out of his way to have his picture taken with a boy on a wheelchair.

The child turned out to be the eldest son of former Purefoods' star point guard Dindo Pumaren, who attended the media briefing with his two sons to get a glimpse of the seven-time rebounding champion.

"He looked scary, but we're happy to have our picture taken with him," said Pumaren.

Just minutes earlier, though, Rodman looked typically smug as he promoted the "Bad Boy Tour," a two-game exhibition featuring several NBA legends and American collegiate standouts, in a press conference yesterday at Cinema 4 in Gateway Mall.

Age may have slowed Rodman down on court, but his trademark swagger remains intact.

"This (Bad Boy Tour) does not matter," said the notorious 6-foot-8 Rodman, who has won two championships with the Detroit Pistons and three titles with the Chicago Bulls. "We have a game to play and we want to entertain the fans here. If not, we're gonna be bad boys."

The visiting NBA legends and their backups will battle the San Miguel All-Stars today in Mandaue City, Cebu. The intimidating crew will also face the Philippine team, coached by Chot Reyes, on Monday at the Araneta Coliseum.

NBA legends Alex English, Calvin Murphy, Darryl Dawkins, Otis Birdsong and playing coach Sidney Moncrief will lead the US squad. Varsity cagers Kareem Reid, Chad Wilkerson, Myron Allen, Olu Famutini, Colin Boddicker and Jason Klotz complete the roster.

"I can't dunk as often as I used to, but I promise to give you one," said Dawkins, who suited up for the Philadelphia 76ers and New Jersey Nets.

Dawkins, famous for his backboard shattering dunks, was also the first player to go straight from high school to the NBA.

"I can't expect something from me, maybe what I can promise to you is my good-looking jumpshot," said English, who was inducted in the Hall of Fame in 1997.

English, whose No. 2 jersey was retired by the Denver Nuggets, led the league in scoring in the '80s by averaging 21.5 points.

Murphy, the oldest at 57 and the smallest at 5-foot-9, also promised a flashy show.

"We will play with a lot of pride," said Murphy, a 1993 Hall of Fame awardee. "We will give the fans a good show."

Raging Bulls rip Realtors

GAMES WEDNESDAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:40 p.m.—Sta. Lucia Realty vs Coca-Cola
7:35 p.m.—Alaska vs Talk 'N Text

By June Navarro

JIMWELL TORION NEVER THOUGHT HE would one day play against his favorite team.

And as much as Red Bull missed him, it made sure he wouldn't enjoy the moment.

The Bulls leaned on a big third-quarter run to blast Sta. Lucia's Torion-reinforced Realtors, 115-104, yesterday in the Gran Matador-PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Starring Mick Pennisi, Junthy Valenzuela and Topex Robinson, the Bulls picked up a second straight win and fifth overall in 11 games.

"We had two good wins so far but I'm not totally convinced that were already out of a slump," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao, referring to the Bulls' four-game slide prior to their back-to-back victories.

Torion, riding on the emotion of the moment, fueled a rally along with Nelbert Omolon and Dennis Espino that trimmed a 20-point deficit to 87-75 before the final period.

The Realtors made it even closer at 95-88 but the attack fizzled out when Espino took his sixth personal foul off Pennisi.

Torion finished with 12 points on top of four rebounds, three assists and a steal in 28 minutes in his first game against his old team.

"Seeing Jimwell play for the other team makes me miss him," said Guiao. "We're happy for him but we don't want him to play good against us."

Waived by the Bulls at the start of the conference, Torion had a brief stint in his native Cebu before he was signed up by the Realtors.

In the second game, James Yap had a career-high 37 points and nine rebounds while Marc Pingris added 17 and a career-high 17 rebounds as Purefoods bucked a slow start to carve out a 90-82 victory over an undermanned Ginebra squad.

The Kings, already without Andy Seigle and Rodney Santos, played minus Romel Adducul, who is scheduled to undergo surgery Tuesday next week to remove bone spurs from his right ankle.

The scores:

First Game

RED BULL 115—Villanueva 29, Pennisi 23, Valenzuela 15, Fonacier 12, Baguio 10, Ybañez 9, Robinson 9, Bugia 6, Najorda 2, Alvarez 0, Hrabak 0, Tugade 0

STA. LUCIA 104—Omolon 30, Espino 13, Torion 12, Calimag 10, Cabagnot 8, Aquino 8, Tolomia 7, Duremdes 7, Gonzales 6, Calli 3, Agapito 0, Mendoza 0

Quarters: 26-23, 48-48, 87-75, 115-104

Larios arrives, set to appear on ABS-CBN today

Salven L. Lagumbay

LARIOS

JESS YUSON

FORMER WORLD CHAMPION OSCAR "Chololo" Larios of Mexico arrived yesterday to take part in the promotional blitz for his much-anticipated July 2 showdown with Filipino superstar Manny Pacquiao.

Larios, who was with his manager, arrived on an EVA Air flight from Taipei which landed at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport before noon yesterday.

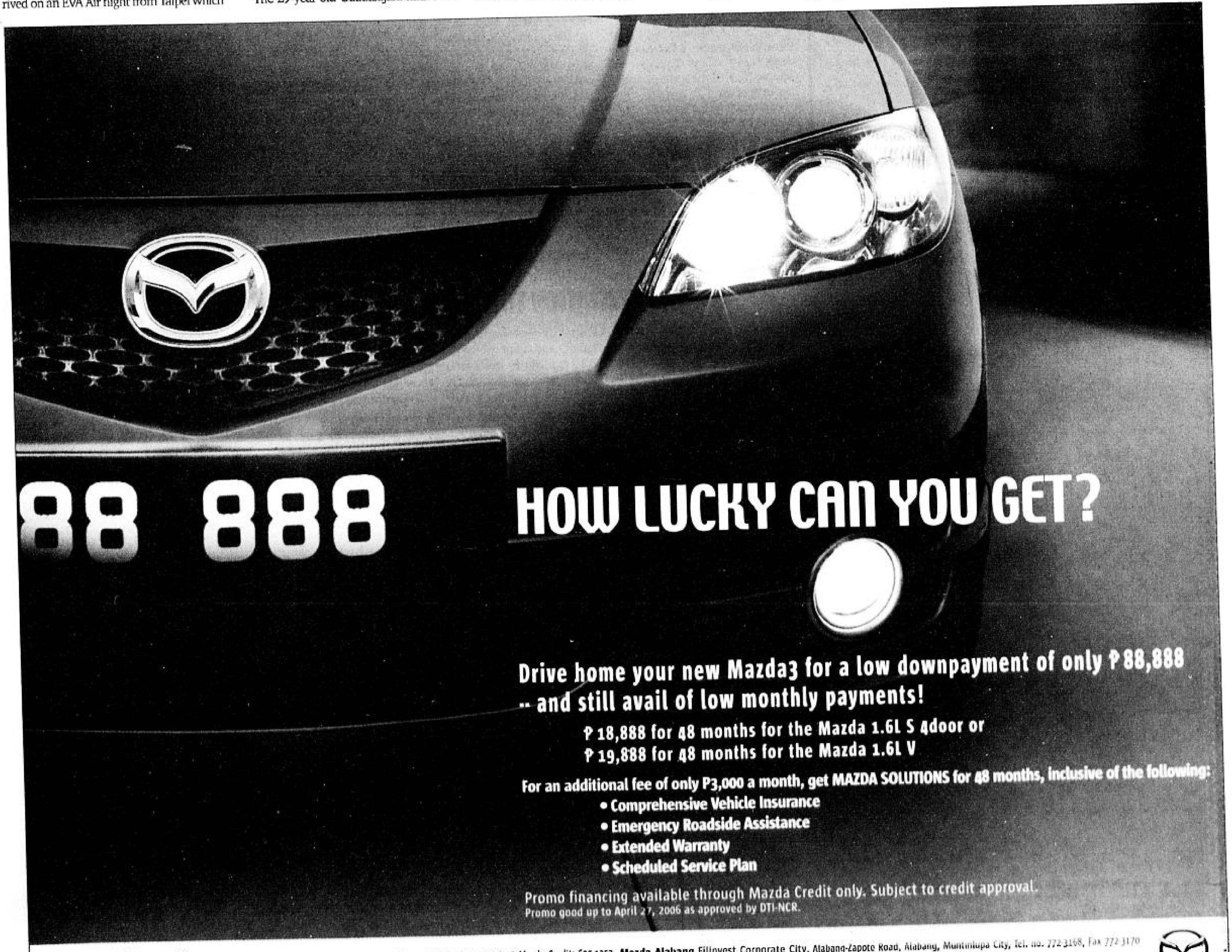
"I've waited long for this opportunity to fight Pacquiao. I respect Pacquiao as one of the greatest fighters of our time," said Larios in Spanish, which was translated by former tennis star-turned-sportscaster Dyan Castillejo for airport reporters

The 29-year-old Guadalajara native will be staying in the country for three days before returning to Guadalajara this weekend to start training.

Larios, the WBC super bantam king, is set to appear as guest in a number of ABS-CBN programs today, including MUP, RADIO, Wowowee and others, before taking part in a special press conference tomorrow at the ABS-CBN headquarters.

The Pacquiao-Larios clash is set for 12 rounds with the Filipino's WBC International super featherweight title at stake at the Araneta Coliseum. It will be aired live in the US according to Rafael Mendoza, Larios' promoter and advisor

"I'll try my best to beat Pacquiao. This is the biggest opportunity in my life," said Larios. *With a report from Nikko Dizon*



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0559, Series of 2006.

mazda

Austria sees no easy tiffs for Painters in Unity Cup

COACH LEO AUSTRIA BELIEVES THERE ARE still no easy games ahead for Rain or Shine in the PBL Unity Cup even after toppling league-leader Montaña Pawnshop.

"You can't take it easy against any team in the league right now. Every team is strong," said Austria as Rain or Shine tackles the struggling Hapee-PCU today at the Olivarez Sports Center in Parañaque.

While Rain or Shine shoots for its third straight win at 4 p.m., Toyota Otis will also vie to keep possession of first place in its 2 p.m. match versus Harbour Centre.

"Hapee is coming off a defeat so I'm sure coach Junel (Baculi) will find ways to motivate his players to beat us," said Austria.

Rain or Shine is coming off a huge 94-86 overtime win versus Montaña last Tuesday. Erwin Sta. Maria provided the unexpected boost as he came off the bench to score a game-high 22 points on a 6-of-8 shooting from beyond the arc.

The former Mapua standout shared scoring chores with Marvin Ortiguerra and Jojo Tangkay as the Elasto Painters rallied in the extra period.

Toyota Otis also staged its own comeback win to repulse TeleTech, 82-80, last Sunday. Point guard Boyet Bautista played the hero's role for the second straight game as he spearheaded the Sparks' recovery from a 23-point deficit.

Rain or Shine crushed Hape e-PCU, 66-48, while Toyota Otis had a tougher time in disposing Harbour Centre, 76-74, in their first-round encounters.

Although Jason Castro averages a league-leading 17.1 points per game for Hapee-PCU, team star Gabby Espinas is coming off his worst offensive performance this conference.

Espinas scored just three points on a 1-of-8 shooting from the field in the Teethmasters' 54-66 setback to Granny Goose. *Jasmine W. Payo*

GAMES TODAY
(Olivarez College Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Harbour Centre
4 p.m.—Hapee-PCU vs Rain or Shine

MARVIN Ortiguerra (right) is a key man for Rain or Shine.
EDWIN BACASMAS

Bulldogs gore Tams

IN A REVERSAL OF ROLES, PERENnial collegiate league tailender National University blasted reigning UAAP champion Far Eastern University, 80-60, in the first Fr. Martin's Cup Nike Summer League yesterday at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Gym in Manila.

The Bulldogs got their go-ahead basket at 9-8 in the first period, never looking back from then as they took a 59-42 cushion going into the final canto.

So efficient were the wards of coach Manny Dandan that 15 players managed to score for the Bulldogs in a game that was a big turnaround from an 86-67 defeat at the hands of Ateneo last Saturday.

"Since most of my players are rookies, I want to give them equal minutes with the veterans for them to gain experience needed for tough rivals and that strategy worked for us," Dandan said.

Edwin Asoro led NU with 14 points while Mark Berry chipped in 11 points.

Guard Jonathan Janke helped ice the win in the final period, sinking back-to-back baskets that gave NU a 64-42 spread.

NU's defense, meanwhile, limited FEU to mere lucky breaks and trips to the stripe in the game.

In juniors division matches, FEU-A took St. Mary's Q.C to school, 108-26, La Salle Greenhills thrashed UPIS, 79-50, and San Beda College shocked Adamson U-A 68-61.

In Women's Division, NU spoiled EAC's homecourt advantage for a 77-68 win. *Llanesca T. Panti*

Shootout cast complete

ARSENIC LAUREL, KING REYNO, Dennis Valdes and Jay Laurel combined for a net score of 61 to rule the Manila Golf Club eliminations for the Ford National Team Shootout recently.

Over at Forest Hills in hilly Cogeo, Rizal, the foursome of Paul Yap, Anthony Lee, Sonny Santiago and Jerome Ngo led the qualifers with a net score of 60.

And at Valley Golf Club, Raymond Tansengco, Dennis Huang, Ed Goli and Francis Rodrigo emerged the best out of 18 teams with a net score of 59.

The top teams from the three clubs and the next four teams behind them advance to the Satellite finals of Luzon East at Wack Wack Golf and Country Club on May 13.

The other qualifiers from Manila Golf were David, Jason, Vincent and Jonathan Lim (net 62), Dodo Cu-Unjieng, John Sallee, Loe Lubus and Jorge Neri (62), Jojo and Ina Guingona, Tony Olbes and Neil Tovey (62) and Anthony Filamor, Andrew Tioco, Noji Alindogan and Martin Zamora (65).

Among those advancing from Forest Hills were Horacio Morales, Allan Yap, Gary Uy and Jong Laput (61) and Tonton San Diego.

SPORTSWATCH

Fort Bonifacio hosts Manic Sunday

MANIC SUNDAY, A DUATHLON AND FUN RUN EVENT, FIRES OFF ON APRIL 30, Sunday at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig. The event, organized by Action & Fitness magazine and co-presented by Avia, will feature a 10k Fun Run and the 5k run-18k cycle-3k run duathlon. Overall, age group and corporate relay team medals and prizes are at stake. Registration is ongoing and ends at 5 p.m. on April 29. Fee is P150 for the 10k fun run, P350 for the duathlon, and P700 for the corporate relay category. Those who will register on race day will have to pay an additional P100. For inquiries, call 374-6772 (Inja Fajatin) or email at inja@speed-mag.com. Download the registration form at www.speed-mag.com.

Victorino rules drag race kickoff

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—GEORGE VICTORINO EMERGED THE FIRST CHAMPION of the Ginebra San Miguel Underbone Invitational Drag Race Sunday at the Drag Strip of the Batangas Racing Circuit here. Victorino stepped on the gas at the green signal and pulled away midway to ward off runner-up Jay-Ar Flores in the Open Class 2-Valve finals. Sharing the limelight with Victorino were Nomer Andallo and Bimboi Carandang. Andallo topped the Open Class 4-Valve where he turned back Christian Cunanan for the crown. Arandang, on the other hand, bested Anthony Rufino in the Open Class 110-114 division. Contact Kilton Motors Office c/o BRC Operations Manager Rodini Rivera or Nelson Gayola at 817-2241, 729-5365 or fax 815-1241 for details.

Touring Car, Slipstream TV launching

RACE FANS INC. WILL LAUNCH THE SLIPSTREAM TV PARTY TOUR AND the Philippine Touring Car Championship (PTCC) Media Launch 2006 tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. at the Gerry's Grill and the Promenade Parking Area in Greenhills. Race Fans Inc. president Richard Santos gathered the biggest names in the motorsports racing arena in one grand night of celebration and camaraderie highlighted by the presentation of competing drivers and launching of PTCC's new branding and logo. Automobile Association of the Philippines president Mandy Eduque, San Miguel Corporation's Boy Ochoa, Batangas Racing Circuit's Johnny Tan and SIR president Pocholo Ramirez will be the guests of honor in the event.

Hold'em registry closes Saturday

POKER PLAYERS WISHING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MAIN EVENT OF THE MILlion-Peso Hold'em Philippine championship have until 1:30 p.m. on Saturday to register. The P1.6 million tournament starts at 2 p.m. on the same day at the Airport Casino Filipino Parañaque, according to the organizing Philippine Poker Tour (PPT). Registration for the main event may also be done online thru the Internet by visiting www.PhilippinePokerTour.com. For details, call Cindy at 817-9092 or 812-0153.

Malarayat's Liberica tees off today

LIPA CITY—A BANNER FIELD OF 240 PLAYERS MADE UP OF MEMBERS AND guests of Mt. Malarayat sees action in the eighth Liberica Golf championships which starts today using all three nines of the sprawling complex. Half of the field tees off shotgun style starting at 9 a.m. with the other half playing its first 18 tomorrow at the same time before the championship round Saturday at 6:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Architect Antonio Turalba will host cocktails for the field everyday and the awards dinner on Saturday where a lot of fun and surprises await participants. Ricky Velasco, the Malarayat chair, put the tournament together with Abe Avena to act as event director. The tournament will use the Stableford method of scoring with four division champions to be named.

Super Big Event April 29

BIG TIME COCKFIGHTING HAPPENS ON SATURDAY AT THE SAN JUAN COLISEum with the staging of the Super Big Event 7-cock derby. Major backer is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. The top cockers of Davao, Cebu, Negros Occidental, Iloilo, Central Luzon and Northern Luzon are competing in the event backed by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, according to *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio. Set to field their multi-winners are Gov. Chavit Singson, Bebot Uy and Dori Du of Davao, Wakee Salud of Cebu, Ric de Guzman, Nene Abello of Negros, Ellmer and Dodong Codilla of Ormoc, Bebot Roxas of Tarlac, Pol Estrellado, Rudy Albano, Gov. Ito Ynares, Ric de Guzman, Jingco Brothers, Jet Fernando, Tony Lasala, Jun Topacio, Gerry Ramos, Louie Cua, Boy de Roca and Dicky Lim.

Big field seen in Roligon 5-cocker

ROLIGON'S MEGA COCKPIT'S TUKAAN 5-COCK DERBY, A BLOCKBUSTER OFFEring of promoter Rolly Ligon, starts on Saturday with more than 150 breeders taking part. Due to the big number of opening day participants, the elimination round (2-cock) will start at 10 a.m. Submission of weights (1.8 kg-2.4 kg) is set tomorrow from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. For details, call 851-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812 (Tiling Jona). Meanwhile, Roligon's Fastest Win 1-Cock Ulutan/ Hackfight is scheduled tomorrow at 8 a.m.

LGBA Bakbakan at Big Dome today

SOME 80 ENCOUNTERS ARE LINED-UP TODAY AT ARANETA COLISEUM IN CONnection with the LGBA Bakbakan 4-bullstag derby beginning at 3 p.m. Rene "Boy" Diaz, president of the Luzon Gamecock Breeders Association (LGBA) said the event is an elimination round of the NFGB Bakbakan 8-bullstag derby. A participant in the event sponsored by Gran Matador and B-Meg Derby Ace, must score at least three points to qualify for the 8-bullstag. For details, contact 926-7808, 924-5072 or 0920-5851940 (Taz Lunasco).

Alabang chessfest May 6

THE 2ND CHAIRman's Cup Invitational Chess Team Championship begins on May 6, at the 4th Level Activity Center, Festival Supermall, Alabang, in Muntinlupa City.

Among the early entries are the teams of Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino Jr., Tarlac City, GMA-Cavite, Barangays Bayanan and Sucat of the City of Muntinlupa, Almanza Chess Club and Southern Chess Association.

This is a special project of Barangay Alabang, under chair Victor L. Ulanday and the Barangay Council, in cooperation with the Filinvest Corporate City and Festival Supermall.

A total prize of more than P100,000 is at stake with the champion getting P50,000. A Young Masters Chess Challenge for players 14 years and below will be held simultaneously with Mark Tañamor, Viking Ulanday and Ma. Ysabelle Semillano among the early entries. For inquiries, call engineer Joel Hicap at (0917) 881-0340 or through 842-3425 or (0917) 895-8460. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

Republic of the Philippines
City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City
Tel. No. (062) 992-7763

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Drugs and Medicines
Name of Project

Amoxicillin, Clotrimazole, Cefalexin et al.
(Brief Description of GOODS)

1. The City Government of Zamboanga, through the **General Fund 2006** intend to apply the sum of **SEVEN MILLION ONE HUNDRED THIRTY SEVEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED TWENTY PESOS (P7,137,520.00) ONLY** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for **Drugs and Medicines (PR No. 100-06-04-0752 & 100-06-04-0751)**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. **The City Government of Zamboanga now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for Amoxicillin, Clotrimazole, Cefalexin et. al.** Delivery of the GOODS is required for **Ten (10) working days.** The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the law or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from **City Government of Zamboanga-Procurement, Acquisition & Award Division** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from **8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday starting April 27 to May 15, 2006.**
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of **P1,900.00** The method of payment will be **Cash payable to the City Treasurers Office**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The City Government of Zamboanga will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **May 02, 2006; 10:00 AM at the City Engineers Conference Room.**
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **10:00 AM, May 15, 2006** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of **Check, Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Manager's Check** payable to the City Treasurer, Bank Draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit and in the amount of **P71,375.20** or Bank Guarantee in the amount of **P107,062.80** or **Surety Bond** in the amount of **P178,438** or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted
8. Bid opening shall be on **May 15, 2006 at 10:00 AM in the City Engineers Conference Room, City Hall, Z.C.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. **To be delivered in the Office of the City General Services Intended for the Office of the City Health.**
10. The City Government of Zamboanga reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Procurement, Acquisition & Awards Division
Milagros W.S. Saavedra
City Hall, N.S. Valderosa St., Z.C.
Tel. Fax 992-7763 or 991-0862

(Sgd.) **ATTY. SAMUEL A. MARIANO**
BAC Vice-Chairman

(PDI–April 27 & May 4, 2006)

PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE
INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS

Offered for Sale on a per site and on an "as-is, where-is" basis, are 19 residential lots with site nos. 1-18 formerly belonging to the Peninsula Development Bank (PENBANK) and site no. 19 formerly belonging to Interland Chemicals, Inc. (ICI), as follows:

A. PENINSULA DEVELOPMENT BANK

Barangay Mapagong, Pagbilao, Quezon

Site No.	TCT No.	Lot No.	Area (sq.m.)	Price/sq.m.	Indicative Price
1*	T-201847	Lot-1117-A	3,582	P200.00	P716,400.00

**Site 1 is a residential lot with a net useable area of 3,582 sq.m. This lot is with informal settlers. The TCT is still registered in the name of Rosita Uy, the Certificate of Sale in favor of PMO was registered with the Lucena City Register of Deeds on 11 April 2002.*

Barangay Bukal, Pagbilao, Quezon (Peninsula Homes Subdivision)

Site No.	TCT No.	Lot No.	Area (sq.m.)	Price/sq.m.	Indicative Price
2	T-390065	Lot-3	194	P 450.00	P 87,300.00
3	T-390068	Lot-6	142	600.00	85,200.00
4	T-390067	Lot-5	100	600.00	60,000.00
5	T-390066	Lot-4	96	600.00	57,600.00
6	T-390069	Lot-5	102	600.00	61,200.00
7	T-390088	Lot-4	82	450.00	36,900.00
8	T-390062	Lot-3	135	300.00	40,500.00
9	T-390063	Lot-5	64	350.00	22,400.00
10	T-390064	Lot-7	93	300.00	27,900.00

Barangay Bukal, Pagbilao, Quezon (Intertown Homes Subdivision)

Site No.	TCT No.	Lot No.	Area (sq.m.)	Price/sq.m.	Indicative Price
11	T-390101	Lot-12, Blk. 9	162	P 750.00	P 121,500.00
12	T-390092	Lot-18, Blk. 10	162	750.00	121,500.00
13	T-390091	Lot-8, Blk. 11	231	650.00	150,150.00
14	T-390090	Lot-7, Blk. 8	150	600.00	90,000.00
15	T-390100	Lot-8, Blk. 8	150	600.00	90,000.00
16	T-390106	Lot-15, Blk. 8	150	600.00	90,000.00
17	T-390102	Lot-11, Blk. 9	150	650.00	97,500.00

Barangay Panaon, Unisan, Quezon

Site No.	TCT No.	Lot No.	Area (sq.m.)	Price/sq.m.	Indicative Price
18**	T-390096	Lot-1-B-2	830	P200.00	P166,000.00

***Site 18 is with informal settlers.*

B. INTERLAND CHEMICALS, INC.

Barangay Balubad, Atimonan, Quezon

Site No.	TCT No.	Lot No.	Area (sq.m.)	Price/sq.m.	Indicative Price
19	T-297151	Parcel 7, Lot-3	45,040***	P130.00	P5,855,200.00

****Net useable area*

Offers will be received, opened and tabulated in the presence of offerors on 17 May 2006, at 3:00 p.m., 6th Floor, PMO Conference Room, NDMC Building, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Interested parties may request for duly authenticated copies of the Offer For Sale Documents for a nominal fee of P500.00 from the PMO Marketing Office, 5th Floor, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

For more information, please call Mr. John DF. Baldemor of the PMO Marketing Department at 817-6331 or 817-8762.

(PDI–April 27, 28 & 29, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Labor and Employment
NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS COMMISSION
Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) invites all interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to submit bid proposal for SECURITY and JANITORIAL SERVICES. The approved budget in the amounts of P1,923,874.50 for Security Services and P879,972.00 for Janitorial Services are sourced from the 2006 GAA. The winning bidders shall serve for the period July 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006.

Interested parties must register by submitting registration requirements to the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat, 6th Floor, Room No. 602, PPSTA Building No. 4, Banawe St., Quezon City, starting April 27, 2006 until May 10, 2006. Only bidders duly registered with the NLRC shall be allowed to participate in the competitive bidding activities, to wit:

ACTIVITY		DATE	TIME	VENUE
Pre-Bid Conference	Security Janitorial	May 15, 2006 May 16, 2006	1:30 p.m. 1:30 p.m.	6th Floor, NLRC Conference Room
Submission and opening of Eligibility Requirements	Security Janitorial	May 29, 2006 May 30, 2006	1:30 p.m. 1:30 p.m.	6th Floor, NLRC Conference Room
Submission and opening of Bids	Security Janitorial	June 9, 2006 June 9, 2006	9:00 a.m. 1:30 p.m.	6th Floor, NLRC Conference Room

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria IRR-A under R.A. 9184. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Eligibility requirements shall be distributed during the Pre-Bid Conference.

Registered bidders shall submit their eligibility requirements in a sealed envelope to the NLRC Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), marked with the title "SECURITY SERVICES" OR "JANITORIAL SERVICES". The name of the bidder shall likewise be stated in capital letters.

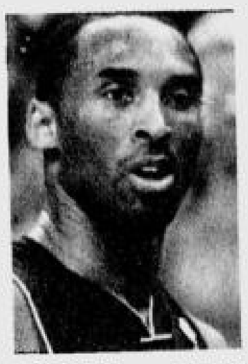
NLRC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, declare a failure of bidding, refuse to award the contract, or accept the offer most advantageous to the government. It also assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate/indemnify bidders for expenses incurred in the preparation of bids. Prospective bidders are required to conform and observe the provisions of Republic Act 9184 and its implementing rules.

For inquiry, contact Atty. Aristeo B. Lastica, Jr., BAC Secretariat Head, Tel. 740-7733/ 740-7734.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. CARMEN E. TALUSAN**
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - April 27 & May 3, 2006)

Father knows Kobe's the best choice for MVP award



BRYANT REUTERS

TOKYO—GLOBE-TROTTING US BASKETBALL coach Joe Bryant insists that his superstar son Kobe should be named the NBA Most Valuable Player this season, despite an unprecedentedly long list of contenders.

The senior Bryant, who has led the Tokyo Apache to the final playoffs this weekend in the inaugural season of Japan's first-ever professional basketball league, admits that "there are great candidates out there."

He cited last year's winner Steve Nash of the Phoenix Suns, Detriot Pistons' Chancey Billups and LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers.

But he believes Kobe deserves his first MVP honor for scoring a stunning 81 points—the second most in the NBA's history—in the Los Angeles Lakers' 122-104 victory over the Toronto Raptors in January.

"As a coach, I would say it this way. If they don't give him the MVP, they've got to create another award that's for the best player of the NBA (National Basketball Association).

"You have to give the title to Kobe. It's a slap in the face if you don't," said the 51-year-old Bryant.

Only Wilt Chamberlain's 100 points, for Philadelphia against New York in 1962, now tops the 27-year-old Lakers guard who was also the leading scorer of the 2005-2006 season, averaging 35.4 points per game.

Joe attributed his only son's on-court excellence, often slammed by critics as selfish and detrimental to team work, to "just the will."

"He's like a basketball nerd and he's very serious about the game. He comes early and stays late. A lot of players resent that," he said. *AFP*

SLAM DUNK TILT

KG finds sky teeming with worthy rivals

By Francis Ochoa

THIS TIME, WHEN KG CANALETA ELEVATES for one of his trademark, gravity-mocking slam dunks, he's going to find the air up there choking with competition.

This is no longer the same field he picked apart in Laoag, when he made his name synonymous to the contest by doing the unthinkable—taking off from the free throw line for a Jordanesque dunk that relegated surprise finalist Enrico Villanueva of Red Bull into something less than a footnote.

This edition of the All-Star slam dunk will have a field featuring two other former champions and a former runner-up who made waves recently by reducing the 6-foot-9 Marlou Aquino into poster props.

San Miguel's Brandon Cablay, the shifty 2003 champion, Red Bull's Cyrus Baguio, the quicksilver Santo Tomas product who won the title in 2004, and Coca-Cola's John Arigo, the sweet-shooting aerial artist whose baseline jam over Aquino decorated sports pages days after he pulled off the feat, will challenge Canaleta for the crown.

Arigo was the 2002 runner-up who lost a close match to ex-San Miguel guard Joey Mente.

"It's a special field," Canaleta admitted, in Filipino. Special in that anybody can win, added the lanky Air21 leaper.

"Anybody can go ahead and try to take the crown from me," said the former UE Warrior.

There's a catch, though, one Canaleta delivered with a hint of laughter: "None of them can expect me to just give it up."

The eliminations and final of the dunk contest is set on April 28 at the Xavier University gym, a fitting appetizer to the All-Star game the following day.

Creative

The 6-foot-4 forward has been trying out different routines in practice, hoping to come up with one that will catch the fancy of the fans in Cagayan de Oro City. He gave off a few clues as to what he will do. A little tomahawk here. A windmill there. Maybe even a repeat of last year's 15-foot winner.

None of the routines is etched in stone.

"When I get there, in the court, surrounded by fans, that's when I'll get creative," said Canaleta. "That's when I'll make up my mind."

As for his opponents in the event held in cooperation with Xtreme Magic Sing and Welcoat Paints, Canaleta said they excite him and make him nervous.

"These are past champions of the contest. There's a lot of pressure on me to deliver and that's why I'm a little bit nervous."

And just where is the excitement coming from?

"Imagine if I beat them."

Indeed, a victory would cement Canaleta's stature as the best player in the air. If he wins, he will become the first player to win the crown back-to-back since Vergel Meneses pulled off the trick in 1992 and 1993. But even Meneses didn't have to beat such a tough field. For the first time in the history of the All-Stars, three champions will be battling it out for the crown.

Small wonder that the pony-tailed swingman is urging his opponents to give it their best.

"Let's give the fans something they'll remember for a long time," he said as a message to Cablay, Baguio and Arigo.

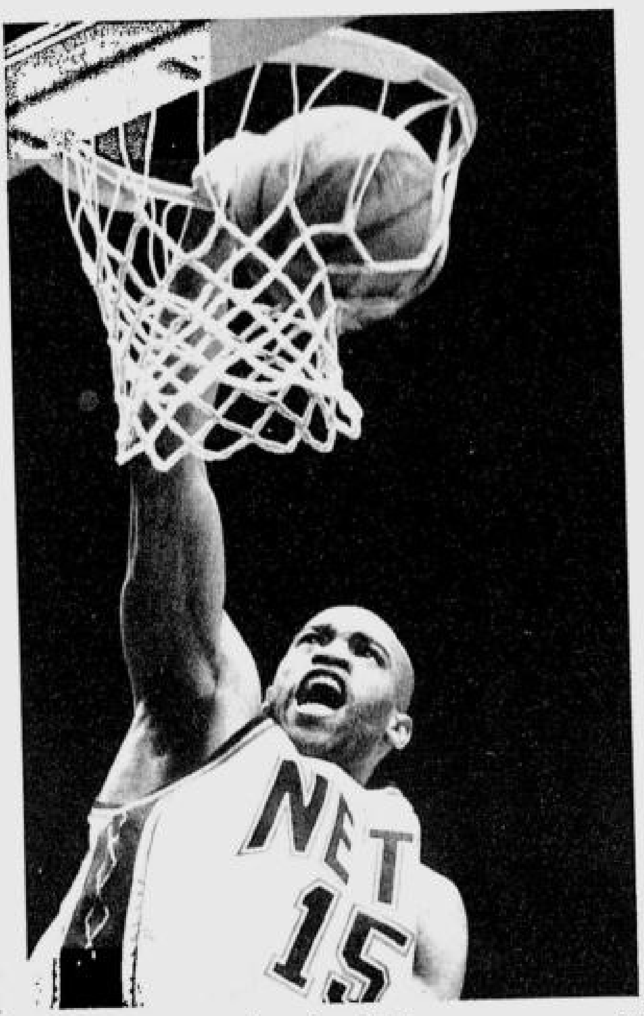
And maybe, too, they'll give Canaleta an even brighter footnote to flaunt this time around.

Beach soccer kicks off

ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE COUNTRY'S ULTIMATE summer getaway as the San Miguel Summer beach soccer tournament kicks off April 29 at Summerplace in Boracay Island. Dubbed as Summerplace's Luna Nueva 2006, the beach soccer tournament is a whole-day event set from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Interested participants have until Friday night to register. Registration is at Summerplace, near Station 2. Look for Kit Acenas or Wendell Simbulan. The champion will receive special prizes from SMB. The event is presented by SMB Summer Babad and supported by K-Lite 103.5 and Wave 89.1, the official radio stations, Casa Pilar Resort, Digiprint and organized by X-10 Events Inc.

Sarvida paces duckpin tilt

LITTLE-KNOWN JUNILO SARVIDA OF POWERhouse Novaliches Bowling Association rolled 424 pinfalls to grab the early lead in men's singles of the 31st Grand National and 12th National Youth duckpin bowling championships at the Marketplace in Madaluyong City. Sarvida pulled away from second-running Jimmy Garcera of Cainta Bowling Association, who carded 399. Geena Gregorio of NSBA showed the way in ladies' singles, rolling 391 pinfalls to pace Nora Certeza of Angono Rizal Bowling Association by 10 pins. NSBA White Lily I moved ahead in the men's and ladies' team competition.



VINCE Carter soars for a slam dunk. AFP

Spurs make it 2-0

Wizards, Nets score equalizers

SAN ANTONIO—BRENT BARRY made a 3-pointer that hit the rim twice, went high and fell through with four seconds left in regulation, then Manu Ginobili carried San Antonio to a 128-119 victory over Sacramento on Tuesday in Game 2 of their first-round series.

Ginobili led the Spurs with 32 points. He also had nine assists. Tony Parker was far from the speedy dominator he was in the opener, but still produced 22 points and 10 assists.

Barry scored 22 and shot 8-of-12, including 4-of-7 on 3-pointers. Tim Duncan, playing on his 30th birthday, had 14 points and 13 rebounds.

Bonzi Wells made nine of 10 shots in the first half, putting in his only miss, and finished with 28 points and 12 rebounds. He fouled out with 17 seconds left in the fourth quarter.

Shareef Abdur-Rahim was 12-of-19 for 27 points with nine rebounds. Kevin Martin, starting for the suspended Ron Artest, scored a career-high 26.

Game 3 is Friday night in Sacramento.

In Cleveland, Gilbert Arenas scored 30 points, Antawn Jamison added 21 and Washington bottled up LeBron James to even the Eastern Conference series with the Cavaliers at one game apiece following an 89-84 triumph.

Caron Butler added 21 points and was Washington's primary defender on James, who recorded a triple-double in his playoff debut.

The series shifts to the Verizon Center for Game 3 in the best-of-seven series on Friday.

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Vince Carter rebounded from a dismal shooting performance to score 33 points and lead the Nets over foul-plagued and undermanned Indiana, 90-75, evening their first-round series at a game each.

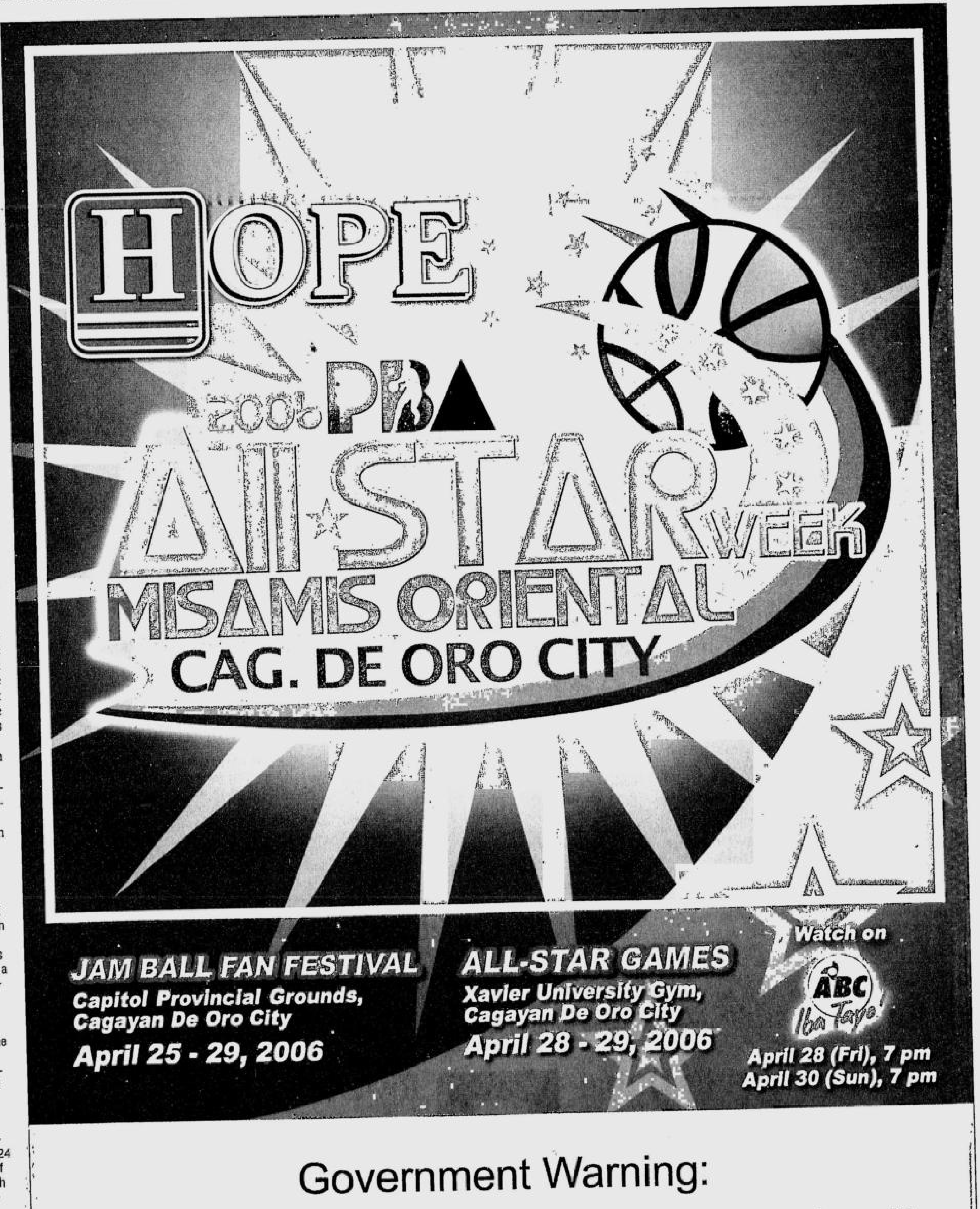
Game 3 is at Indiana on Thursday.

Coach of the Year

In Dallas, Avery Johnson was honored as the NBA's coach of the year Tuesday after leading the Dallas Mavericks to a 60-win season in his first full season as coach.

That matched the team record for victories, first set three years ago when he played for the team.

NBA on SOLAR SPORTS—Memphis vs Dallas (8 a.m., live; 8 p.m. replay)



Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

GTK asks for head of PSC's Ramirez

RAMIREZ

By Marc Anthony Reyes

GO TENG KOK IS ON THE warpath once again.

The controversial president of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association, who has tangled with many sports officials, including two former Philippine Olympic Committee presidents in the past, is now at odds with Philippine Sports Commission chair Butch Ramirez over the release of funds for staging this year's National Open athletics championship.

"He (Ramirez) promised to help us and then his underling told us that our request (for funding) was turned down," said Go yesterday. "If he can't do his job, he should resign for delicadeza."

But the PSC board led by commissioner Richie Garcia ignored Go's demand and threw its support behind Ramirez, who invoked the current no-liquidation, no-fund campaign by the agency in its bid to require national sports associations to settle previous fund releases.

The Patafa still has an unliquidated advance of P900,000 which it failed to settle as Go had promised yesterday. The Patafa budget for the RP Open is P1.4 million.

"Just because the request was not granted they would call for the chairman's resignation?" said Garcia. "It's not the solution to this problem."

Already caught in the controversy was PSC executive director Guillermo Iroy who resigned last Monday after his unauthorized announcement of the PSC board's decision to turn the Patafa request for funds helped fuel the Go-Ramirez rift.

GO

Adamson spikers repulse Lyceum

By Marc Anthony Reyes

CHERRY MACATANGAY STAMPED her class as Adamson University subdued Lyceum, 25-20, 26-24, 24-26, 25-15, yesterday to take the solo leadership in the Shakey's V-League at the Blue Eagle Gym.

Macatangay, one of the few remaining veterans in the league and a member of the national team, was unstoppable from beyond the net, drilling in 27 points, 24 of them on spikes to anchor the Lady Falcons' second straight victory in the meet.

Rissa Jane Laguilles, Jaqueline So and team captain Kristine Ann Dave also provided ample help for the 6-foot Macatangay, who is reinforcing her alma mater along with fellow RP team member Rubie de Leon.

Laguilles, 19, shared the attacking chores with Macatangay by banging in 12 of her 13 points on spikes, while So and Dave chipped in 11 and 9 points, respectively.

So also accounted for two blocks while De Leon had one to fortify Adamson's defense which managed to fend off the balanced scoring of the Lady Pirates.

Lyceum skipper Sherrilyn Carrilo led her team with 12 points and nine other teammates contributed in the scoring but they weren't enough to prevent their first loss after their opening-game win over Far Eastern University.

Dahlia Cruz, Beverly Boto, Ma. Concepcion Legaspi and Kathleen Jarin joined the scoring with nine, eight, seven and five points, respectively, for Lyceum.

Carrillo made nine attack points and three blocks to fuel her team which managed to hack out a set victory in the third but lost too much energy in the process and quickly folded up in the next set.

Mayol eyes KO victory

UNDEFEATED RODEL MAYOL IS not ruling out a knockout win when he seeks the World Boxing Council minimumweight title of Japanese Eagle Kyowa in their May 6 championship bout in Tokyo, Japan.

Mayol (22 wins, 17 KOs), who underwent a WBC-mandated medical test at a local hospital in Tokyo yesterday, told the INQUIRER that somebody is definitely going to kiss the canvas when he attempts to become the only Filipino to hold a world crown.

For all his popularity, superstar Manny Pacquiao only holds a regional title, while the Hawaii-based Brian Viloria, who owns the WBC junior flyweight crown and is a 100 percent Filipino by blood, is an American citizen.

Mayol, the No. 1 Filipino contender in the 105-lb division, was accompanied to the medical testing yesterday by trainer Brix Flores, and a staff of Yasuo Matsuoka, Mayol's manager.

Kyowa (15-1, 6 KOs) took the medical test earlier.

According to Mayol, he took a CT Scan test, X-ray, as well as urine and blood tests. *Salven Lagumbay*

Mobile remains clean

MOBILE KEPT ITS UNBEATEN record to lead the way in Group B of the 1st Estong Ballesteros Inter-company basketball tournament.

Propped up by its back-to-back wins over GNC (71-69) and league presentor Prime Peak Properties Ltd (75-64), Mobile now has a 3-0 slate, just a notch ahead of Robi Cars, which beat Ginebra in overtime, 89-82, for its 2-0 card.

Transcend Cargo Express carries a 2-1 slate after its 100-98 double overtime win over Ginebra, which dropped to 2-2, followed by Magallanes Publishing House (1-1), GNC (1-3) and Prime Peak Properties (0-4).

Amit drops match vs crack Japanese

RUBILEN AMIT: Her best isn't enough this time. ROGER MARGALLO

By Musong Castillo

PHILIPPINE ACE RUBILEN AMIT found a second Japanese too hot to handle last night, bowing to Chihiro Kawahara, 9-4, in the second round to fall into the losers' bracket of the rich Enerva Ladies' 9-Ball Open.

Two hours after ripping former all-Japan champ Kyouko Sone, 9-3, Amit ran into a brick wall in Kawahara and, never getting the breaks the entire match, bowed out at the end of the tense defensive battle.

The Filipina now faces the prospect of elimination with another loss in the $30,000 event participated in by nine countries.

Iris Rañola, the only other RP bet in the 32-entry main draw, blew a 4-0 lead and lost to Taiwanese Pei-Chun Lin, 7-9. Relegated to the losers' bracket, Iris has to beat Suhana Dewi of Malaysia, a 9-8 loser to Shu-Pin Kao of Taiwan, to stay alive.

"I have no excuses," the gracious Amit, 24th in the World Pool Championships in Taiwan last year, said in Filipino. "She (Kawahara) is a good player and she capitalized on all the errors I made."

Fancied two-time world defending champion Kim Ga-young opened her campaign on a bright note, tripping Taiwanese Chow Chieh-Yu, 9-7, to earn a second round date with Japan's Sakiko Namildi, a 9-8 victor over Hoe Shu Wah of Singapore.

There are 14 Taiwanese in the field, and one that got a lot of attention from the Robinson's Galleria crowd was 26-year-old Fan Jui-Fang, one of four players who won their first two matches.

A charmer packing a mean break, Fang first ripped Chai Zeet Huey of Singapore, 9-5, before beating Tan Hsiang-ling, 9-4, in the second round.

"I still played with a lot of mistakes out there," Fang said through an interpreter. "Winning my first two matches means I will play the better players in the winners' bracket and I can't afford to make the same mistakes I made (today)."

N. Cotabato cagers win

KIDAPAWAN, NORTH COTABATO-AIDED BY a momentary break caused by hard rain outside the packed provincial capitol gym here, Gov. Manny Piñol's North Cotabato Braves recovered their form to roll back the visiting Batang Tagaytay cagers, 83-64, Tuesday night in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship.

The Tagaytay squad of NBC vice president and Mayor Bambol Tolentino was enjoying a double-digit lead when leaks rendered the floor slippery, forcing officials to halt the match.

When the game resumed, the Braves furiously fought back behind their gunners, led by Marvin Martinez and Edu Allado, to grab the lead at the turn, 37-31.

The Braves never looked back after that.

Playmaker Nino Martinez, who sparked Tagaytay past Valencia Golden Harvest at the start of its southern swing the other day, still topscored with 18, but he had difficulty producing throughout the match.

The Braves raised their record to 5-3 in the southern division of the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

Action resumes today with Taguig facing Bacchus/Harbour Centre-Manila at 5 p.m. at the EAC gym in Manila and defending champion Ozamiz Cotta meeting Valencia at 6 p.m. at Valencia's gym.

The scores:

N. COTABATO 83—Martinez 16, Allado 13, Tamayo 11, Regalado 9, Cabanog 8, Reyes 6, Ligue 5, Binas 4, Coldura 4, Jawod 3, Dagatan 2, Fortun 0, Del Norte 0.

TAGAYTAY 64—Marquez 18, Robillos 13, Genido 9, Mallari 7, Finuliar 6, Mendoza 5, Reyes 5, Gulyab 2, Pelejera 0, Jorge 0.

Quarters: 12-15, 37-31, 58-47, 83-64

Legaspi ties Ardina; Yee, De Villa lead

MAAN LEGASPI ERASED A NINE-SHOT deficit to tie former world champion Dottie Ardina for the lead even as Mico Yee and Debbie de Villa held on to pace their respective divisions after the fifth and penultimate round of the Callaway Junior World qualifier at the Canlubang north course.

DE VILLA

Legaspi carded a 73 against the 82 of the struggling Ardina that put them all square at 379 in girls Class C going into today's final round.

Yee shot a 70 to stay on top by three over John Kier Abdon, who bounced back with a 70, with a 360 aggregate in boys Class A while de Villa, winner of the Philippine Ladies Open crown last January, widened her lead to six in the girls side.

Siblings Wolen and Princess Superal and Shailesh and Rachita Vasandani were comfortably leading in their respective divisions. Wolen scored a 79-392 for an 11-stroke lead in boys Class B, Princess held a whopping 44-shot advantage in girls Class D, Rachita was up by seven in girls Class E and Shailesh paced boys Class F by five.

Remo continued to hold sway in boys Class C where he leads by three over Miguel Tabuena.

Mia Piccio (girls Class B), JR Gonzales (boys Class D), and Justin Dy (boys Class E) were the pacesetters in the other divisions of this third leg of the summer circuit.

Why the Lakers lost Game 1

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

SURPRISINGLY, THE LOS ANGELES LAKERS SHOULD have won Game 1.

Unexpectedly, Kobe Bryant did not shoot that much in that game, accounting for the Los Angeles' 107-102 loss to the Phoenix Suns in the series' opener the Lakers could have stolen.

It was all the fault of Bryant?

What about Phil Jackson, the Lakers' coach?

But first, before we discuss Bryant and Jackson, some new twists in the most talked-about match-up in the post-season NBA.

Phoenix's small winning margin in Game 1 has stirred hopes the Lakers might yet pull it out of the fire. Perhaps, by the time you are reading this, Game 2 could be over.

Before the scheduled Game 2 today, the Lakers, most notably Bryant and Jackson, could be nursing wounded pride amid their brothers' awesome showing thus far. The sixth-seeded Los Angeles Clippers (47-35) are presently the owners of a sensational 2-0 lead over the No. 3 Denver Nuggets (44-38) in their own playoff series.

A 0-2 deficit for the Lakers would be too deep a hole to climb. It could be the beginning of the end for the purple-and-yellow jerseys. A second straight loss should therefore be a no-no!

Will the Lakers be able to avenge their Game 1 defeat?

Can Los Angeles turn the tables and eliminate Phoenix?

A tall order if we go by the rankings. The Lakers (45-37) are the heavy underdogs as No. 7 against the second-seeded Suns (54-28).

But if Game 1 were to be a gauge, the Lakers are definitely capable of authoring an upset. They didn't lose that game, they bungled it.

What happened was, Game 1 was the Lakers' great robbery that never was. And that's because Bryant did not shoot, or forgot to shoot at all.

Game 1 could be likened to a bank being robbed by Bryant's lonesome. He almost beat the odds but, alas, he didn't spray the ceiling with shots while ordering bank clients to drop on their knees with raised hands. He got overpowered and, in no time, the guard had put the cuffs on him. A case of too tentative, too late the hero.

In the first quarter of Game 1, Bryant went 16 consecutive possessions without taking a shot.

In the second quarter, he was zero on only four shots.

In the third quarter, he had only three shots—just one finding the hole.

And this was the guy who shot 43 points a game against the Suns before the playoffs, the same guy who scored 81 points once, the only guy on the floor this night with an NBA championship ring, the guy many consider the game's greatest player today.

OK, he did shoot.

In the fourth quarter, with the score tied, he started shooting.

What spouted from his gun were blanks. He missed his first five shots and, for the rest of the quarter, he was like a faucet with a drip-drip-drip and not the usual dam a-bursting.

Shockingly, Bryant not given the license to shoot in the first three quarters was Jackson's idea.

It did pretty much reap results, the score being tied going to the fourth quarter. But then, when it was time for Bryant to win it—as in many past Laker strategies—he couldn't.

Like most great bank heists, the game plan, no matter how sophisticated it may be, had backfired.

Maybe, Jackson crafted the change because the Lakers were 0-7 against the Suns before Monday.

Yes, but then, the Lakers lost all 7 with Bryant mostly fighting guards, foraging for points and firing shots all evening.

It would have been nice again to see the Laker leader doing that in Game 1. At least if they lost as indeed they did, it happened with their main man shooting non-stop—ready to die with his gun un-holstered.

***

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

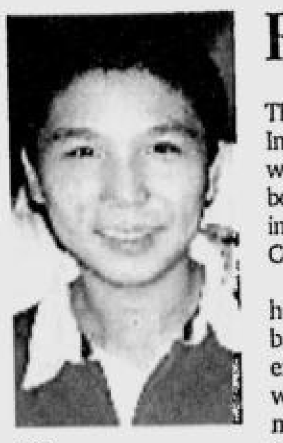
So strikes again in Dubai

DUBAI—WESLEY SO, THE 12-year-old Filipino FIDE Master, downed International Master Sale Srdjan of Croatia Tuesday to remain on course in his bid for an IM result in the eight Dubai Open chess championship at the Dubai Chess and Culture Club here.

The whiz kid (Elo 2254) from Bacoor, Cavite, prevailed over Srdjan (Elo 2453) after 42 moves of a Benko Opening and improved to 2.5 points after three rounds.

Just half a point off the lead, So shared 11th to 21st places.

Among the leaders with perfect 3 points were top seed GM Zviad Izoria (2647, Georgia), second seed GM Darmen Sadvakasov (2619, Kazakhstan), third seed GM Gabriel Sargissian (2612, Armenia), fifth seed GM Evgenij Miroshnichenko (2608, Ukraine), and sixth seed GM Giorgi Kacheishvili (2605, Georgia). *NM Marlon Bernardino*



SO

Riviera Inv'l unfolds today

THE EIGHTH RIVIERA GOLF CLUB Invitational tournament gets underway today with more than 400 members and guests vying for top honors in various divisions at the Langer and Couples courses in Silang, Cavite.

Oca Decipeda and Nelson Ng hope to become the first back-to-back overall champions in the event ending on Sunday as the last year's winners head the cast in the 72-hole member-guest team event sponsored by Smart Communications.

Ford Alabang is putting up a Ford Focus as a hole-in-one prize on all the par 3's while Asiana Airlines is offering a US west coast round-trip ticket and Turf Company a golf cart for aces on specified holes.

"The end of April will be the culmination of all our preparations for the invitational and we expect nothing but a great week of competition and celebrations," said Cesar Jayme, chair of the club's board of directors.

Bayron stays up by 1-shot

BAGUIO—JAY BAYRON SHOT A SCRAMBLING three-over par 64 yesterday and clung to a one-shot lead halfway through the first leg of the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour at the Baguio Country Club course here.

Bayron, whose solid 59 over the short but tricky par-61 layout gave the Cangolf bet a two-shot lead Tuesday, stumbled with a double-bogey on No. 7 and two bogeys against a lone birdie for a 36-hole aggregate of 123.

Marvin Dumandan and three others rallied to within one stroke, while three more stood a stroke or two behind going into the last two rounds of this kickoff leg of the annual event sponsored by Samsung.

Dumandan, eyeing a second straight championship after lording it over practically the same field in Canlubang last month, sizzled with four birdies on the front nine only to trip on a triple-bogey on No. 11 for a one-under-par 60 and a 124 aggregate.

That was the same two-round total by Ferdinand Aunzo and veteran Dave Hernandez, who both had second straight 62s, and Paul Echavez, who matched par 61.

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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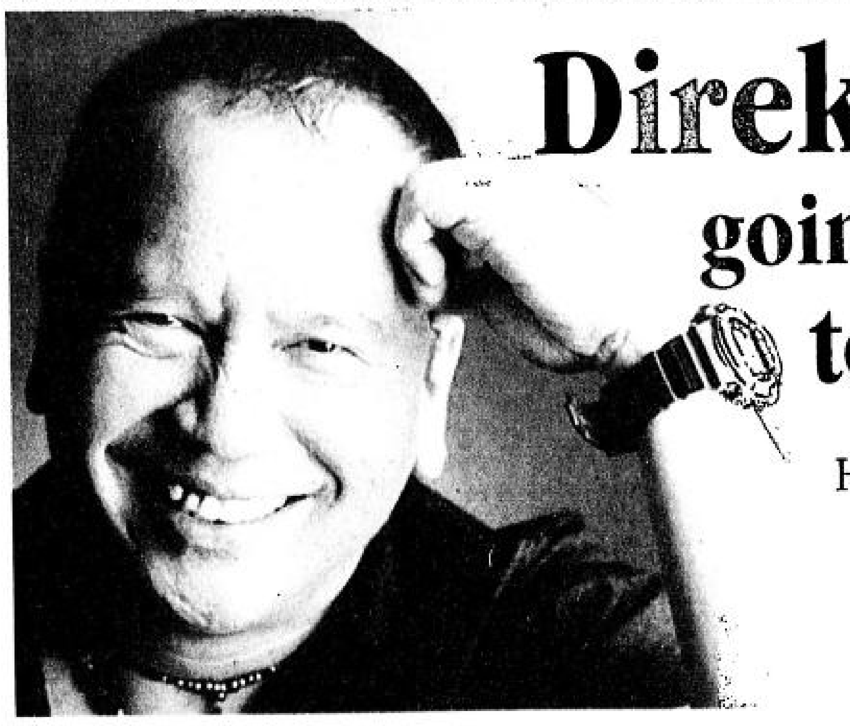


Direk Joey going back to school

He wants to become a guidance counselor for young gay men and women

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

I'M IN MY POST-MIDLIFE crises," award-winning filmmaker Jose Javier Reyes said by way of explaining his plan to go back to school.

To take up guidance counseling, to be precise, at the Ateneo de Manila University.

"It's a two-year masteral-level course," he told INQUIRER Entertainment. "I plan to enroll this June."

Not that he's lacking in degrees.

He finished his AB Honors' Program in Literature and earned his master's degree in Education at the De La Salle University. His Ph.D. in Comparative Literature is pending at the University of Santo Tomas.

Also, he was a Fulbright scholar at the Indiana University, where he took up a doctoral enrichment program in Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies.

Still, he is raring to enroll this school year to pursue a newfound advocacy—help young gay men and women through life.

"In my interactions with young gay people both via the Net and in the real world, I've realized that they have no one to turn to," he explained. "There is no authority figure, no institution, no support group for them. With young people, you cannot be didactic. You have to listen first, to understand them."

He expressed the fear that today's young

DIREK/ A2-2

'Extra' goes off the air

By Marinel R. Cruz

AFTER CONSISTENTLY TOPPING THE RATings in its time slot for two and a half years, "Extra Challenge" is going off the air.

"Extra Challenge" will air its final episode on the Kapuso network on May 26, according to show host Paolo Bediones.

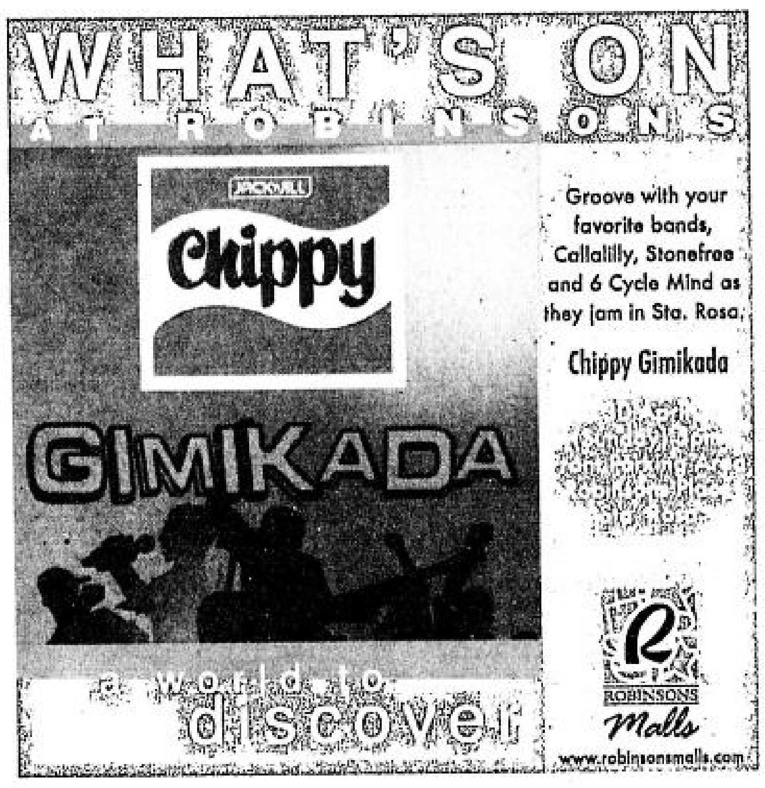
"We felt that we've done everything we could for the show," Bediones told INQUIRER Entertainment in a phone interview. "It rated consistently high and it's constantly being pitted against a lot of programs. It also contributed to GMA 7's rise to No. 1."

Paolo's announcement came in the wake of rumors that GMA 7 is canceling the show because of the indiscretions of co-host Ethel Booba and her boyfriend, former cager Alex Crisano. The network also recently announced the axing of Ethel's weekly magazine show, "Jologs Guide."

"It's unfair to blame Ethel," Paolo said. "The whole crew decided. We felt we had a shot at making TV history in the Philippines by closing the show, just like 'Sienfeld' and 'Friends' did in the United States.

He added: "We've come up with over 90 concepts, aired 600 episodes and featured

EXTRA/ A2-2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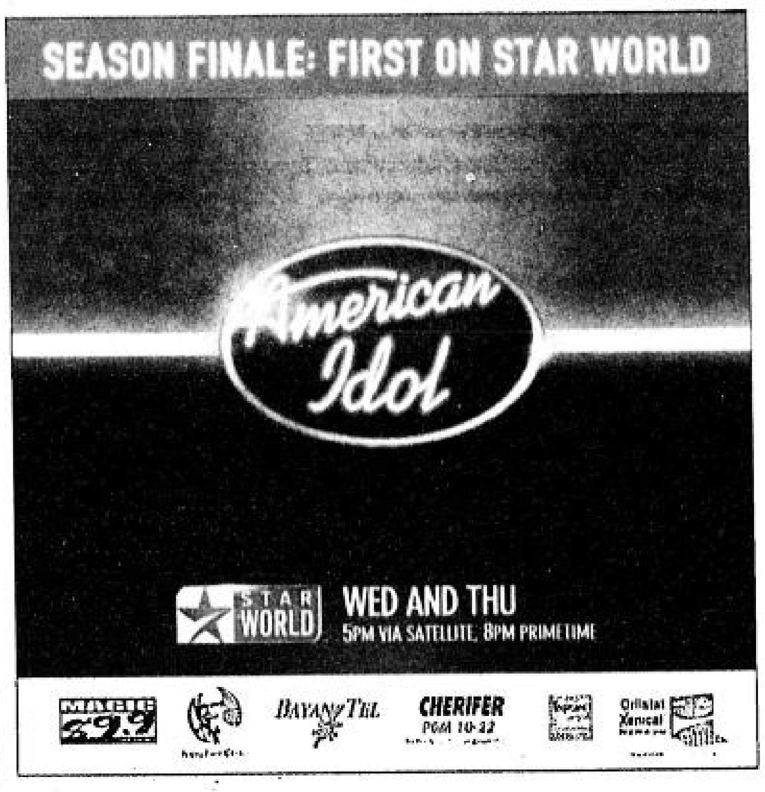
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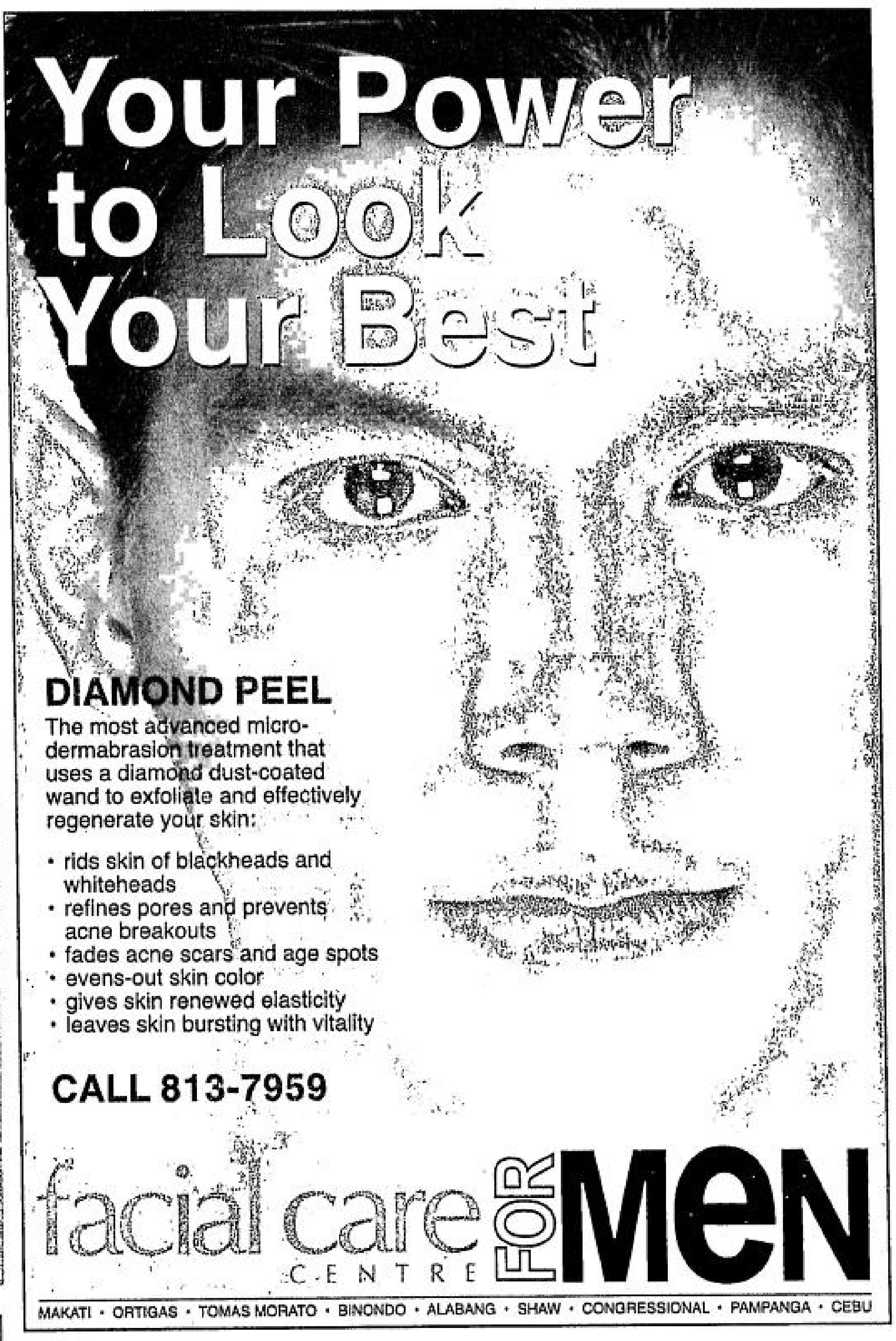
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4 SILENT HILL
11:20, 2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:05
R-13

SHANG CINEPLEX
① THE WILD
MTRCB. GP
1.40, 3:45, 5:50, 7:55, 10.00 LMF
② THE SENTINEL
MTRCB: PG-13
12 00, 2 30, 5 00, 7 30, 10 00 LMF
③ WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
MTRCB. PG-13
12.40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
④ SLITHER
MTRCB: R-18
1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
PREMIERE THEATRE
SILENT HILLS
MTRCB R-13 1 00 4 00,7 00,10 00
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice
Catch the Cineplex Special
You can get your movie tickets now
for "Mission Impossible III"
Showing on May 3, 2006
Call 633-7851, loc. 171 or 633-2227 for more details.
Shangri-La Plaza

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GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA
THEATRE MALL
GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 SILENT HILL
10:30 , 1:05 , 3.40, 6:15 , 8:50
R13
CINEMA 2 SLITHER
11:50 , 2:05,4:20, 6:35 , 8.50
R18
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 WHEN STRANGERS CALLS
10:45 , 1:05 , 3:20, 5:35 , 7:50 , 10:10
PG13
CINEMA 4 THE WILD
10:40 , 12:35 ,2:30, 4:25 , 6:20 , 8:15 , 10:10
GP
CINEMA 5 SENTINEL
10:30 , 12:50 ,3:10 5:30 , 7:50 , 10:10
PG13
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM
| APRIL 27 & 28 ,2006 | WILLIE NEPOMUCENO | 8:00PM |
| APRIL 29 ,2006 | BODY - BUILDER 2006 | 2:00PM |

TEATRINO
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
| EVERY MONDAY
APRIL 28 & 29 , 2006 | TEATRINO DANCE NIGHT
WERE STILL HOT "THE MUSICAL"
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722-4532 LOC 116 | 7:00PM
9:00PM |

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HSBC The world's local bank
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we're still
HOT!
NIÑA ROMUALDEZ
LYNN SHERMAN
SHAMAINE CENTENERA
AND
PINKY MARQUEZ

Teatrino at the Promenade, Greenhills
APRIL 28 & 29 MAY 5,6 AT 8PM.
"BAWDY, BLISSFUL, BITCHY, BOUNTIFUL, BRATTY!"
– NESTOR TORRE
"A FEEL GOOD MUSICAL....
BONDING INTRO... GO SEE THE SHOW!"
– JOHN SILVA
"A giant consciousness raising session.."
- Rina Jimenez David
TICKETWORLD 891 9999 AND
MUSIC MUSEUM 721 6726 TEATRINO 722 4532 LOCAL 116

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangrila Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171
1 (DOLBY) THE WILD GP
2 (DOLBY) THE SENTINEL PG13
3 (DOLBY) WHEN A STRANGER CALLS PG13
4 (DOLBY) SLITHER R18
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) SILENT HILL R13

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (SDS) SLITHER
2 (SDDS) ICE AGE-2
3 (DTS) EIGHT BELOW
4 GOLD (DTS) THE WILD
5 GOLD (DOLBY) SILENT HILLS
6 GOLD (SDDS) WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
7 GOLD (DOLBY) THE SENTINEL
8 (DOLBY STEREO) SUBMERGED
9 (DOLBY STEREO) PAMAHIIN
10 (DOLBY STEREO) D' LUCKY ONES

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
2 (DOLBY) THE WILD
3 (DOLBY) THE SENTINEL
4 (DOLBY) SILENT HILL

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 THE SENTINEL
2 THE WILD
3 SILENT HILLS
4 WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) THE WILD
2 (DOLBY) WHEN THE STRANGER CALL
3 (DOLBY) THE SENTINEL
4 (DOLBY) SILENT HILL

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) WHEN THE STRANGER CALL
2 SLITHER
3 D' LUCKY ONES
4 THE WILD
5 THE SENTINEL

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 SILENT HILLS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
5 SLITHER

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
3 CHINESE TALL STORY
4 RESERVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 SLITHER
2 WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
3 SILENT HILLS
4 THE WILD

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 SILENT HILL
3 PAMAHIIN

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 THE SENTINEL
2 WHEN THE STRANGER CALL

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan. Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 PAMAHIIN

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) THE SENTINEL
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 (DTS EX) THE WILD
4 WHEN THE STRANGER CALL

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel. (042) 660-5271
1 HILLS HAVE EYES
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 PAMAHIIN

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 (DTS) PAMAHIIN
3 (DOLBY) WHEN THE STRANGER CALL
4 THE WILD

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 (DOLBY) THE WILD
3 (DTS) PAMAHIIN
4 SLITHER

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 PAMAHIIN
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 (DOLBY) VENOM

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 PAMAHIIN
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 (DOLBY) EIGHT BELOW
4 (DTS) THE HILLS HAVE EYES

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 (DOLBY) PAMAHIIN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 PAMAHIIN

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 ULTRAVIOLENT
2

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) PLEASE CALL
2 ICE AGE-2
3
4 (DTS)

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) D' LUCKY ONES
2 PAMAHIIN
3 (DTS) WHEN THE STRANGER CALL
4 SLITHER
5 THE WILD

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 FINAL DESTINATION-3
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 WHEN THE STRANGER CALL
4 PAMAHIIN

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 SILENT HILL
2 BETTER THAN SEX

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Direk Joey . . .

From page A2-1

people might not be equipped to navigate this swiftly changing world. "They lack the anchor and the moral compass," Reyes said. "Being gay is not about partying in Malate every Saturday night. Nor is it about cruising Internet sites and being obsessed with your looks."

As far as he is concerned, "Gay Pride" is not limited to one's sexuality. "You have a civic, moral and social responsibility to take care of yourself and your kind. You have the duty to be a useful and productive member of society and to maximize your potentials."

Reyes had initially confided his plan to Apo Hiking Society member Boboy Garrovillo, who then informed him of the family counseling courses at the Ateneo.

He was inspired by friends Cynthia Patag and Sharon Cuneta, he related. "Cynthia finished her master's degree at the DLSU and Sharon, in spite of everything she has achieved, feels comfortable enough to go back to school."

Cuneta topped the exams for the Associate in Arts program of the University of the Philippines Open University.

"You are never too old to try something new," Reyes asserted. "I'm 51, but I don't consider myself old."

The realization hit him at the silver anniversary of the first batch of students he had taught when he was a fresh DLSU graduate. "I noticed that I dressed like my students' children!"

After all, this is the same director behind the seminal 1990s youth flick "Pare Ko."

He said he dreams of putting up an alternative lifestyle center/haven for young gay people or, better yet, conceptualize a TV show that "would speak to the hearts and minds of the youth."

Cancelled shows

In the meantime, he is juggling diverse assignments on the big and small screens.

He is a regular judge, along with Dina Bonnevie, on the model search "Close Up to Fame 2," which replaces his canned show biz gabfest "ETK (Entertainment Konek)" starting this Saturday on ABS-CBN 2. Since the sitcom "Bora" (for which he writes) has also concluded its run, he can now focus on his work as creative consultant for the talk show "Sharon," also on ABS-CBN.

For Seiko Films, he is currently shooting the family drama-comedy, "Listen to Your Heart," starring Eddie Garcia, Gloria Romero, Cherry Pie Picache, Joey Marquez, Diana Zubiri, Christian Vasquez, Alfred Vargas and Keanna Reeves.

Also in the works is the first movie team-up of real-life couple Judy Ann Santos and Ryan Agoncillo under Star Cinema, "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo."

PAOLO on Ethel: "The rumors are unfair to her." ERIK ARAZAS

'Extra' goes off the air

From page A2-1

over 550 challengers. The show has had a very good run and is still doing well."

Paolo said the network had given the show two months to prepare for its final episode. "We're still deciding on whether to end with a bang or close the show quietly."

The program, which used to be titled "Extra, Extra," first aired as a late afternoon magazine show with Paolo and Karen Davila as hosts.

Karen moved to ABS-CBN in 2000 and was replaced by Miriam Quiambao, beauty queen turned host and actress. In 2003, the show was infused with the "reality TV" format. Ethel Booba took Miriam's place in December of that year when the latter married her Italian boyfriend, Claudio Rondinelli and migrated to Hong Kong.

"Seven years is no joke," said Paolo. "There's still no telling how people would react [to the cancellation]. I also don't know if GMA 7 will still come up with a show like this. Topping or equaling it is a daunting task."

But Paolo said the network was still open to the idea of a comeback for "Extra Challenge."

"We'll see," he said, "if there's clamor for it."

THE #1 MOVIE IN AMERICA!
DAHLIA
The MINER
The DARK NURSES
The JANITOR
The GREY CHILD
The RED PYRAMID
WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU
SILENT HILL
BASED ON THE #1 SURVIVAL GAME FROM KONAMI
MTRCB RATING R-13
STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP.
NOW SHOWING

‘No originality’ format?

From Alfonso Pastores (avpastores@gmail.com), Cubao, Quezon City:

It was GMA 7 that first announced it was supporting a Mt. Everest expedition. When the endeavor gathered momentum, ABS-CBN hurriedly came out with its own project involving mountaineers. Seems the Kapamilya network is determined to keep its a “no originality” format, waiting for the rival station to come up with new gimmicks and just copying them. Maybe this is why ABS-CBN is on a losing streak.

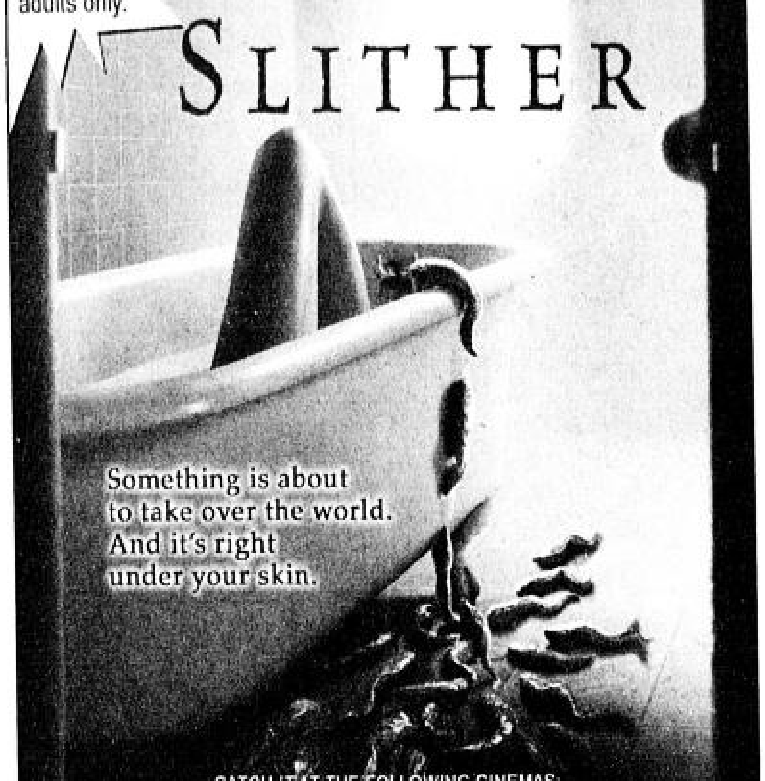
FEEDBACK

POWER PLANT
CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

EIGHT BELOW GP 2:20,4:40,7:05,9:30	THE WILD GP 12:00,2:00,4:00, 6:00,8:00,10:00	WHEN A STRANGER CALLS PG13 2:00,4:00,6:00, 8:00,10:00
SILENT HILL R13 11:50,2:30,5:10, 7:50,10:20	SLITHER R18 12:10,2:10,4:10, 6:10,8:10,10:10	THE SENTINEL PG13 1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41
MATINEE P111.00 – FREE SEATING – SCREENINGS BEFORE 5:00 PM – MON. TO FRI.


MTRCB RATING ▶ R-18 STRICTLY FOR ADULTS | APPROVED W/O CUTS!

WARNING: Due to gory scenes & graphic content this film is for adults only.

OOZING WITH TERROR.
CRAWLING WITH FEAR.
CREEPING WITH HORROR.
GET READY FOR SLIME TIME!

SLITHER

Something is about to take over the world. And it's right under your skin.

CATCH IT AT THE FOLLOWING CINEMAS:

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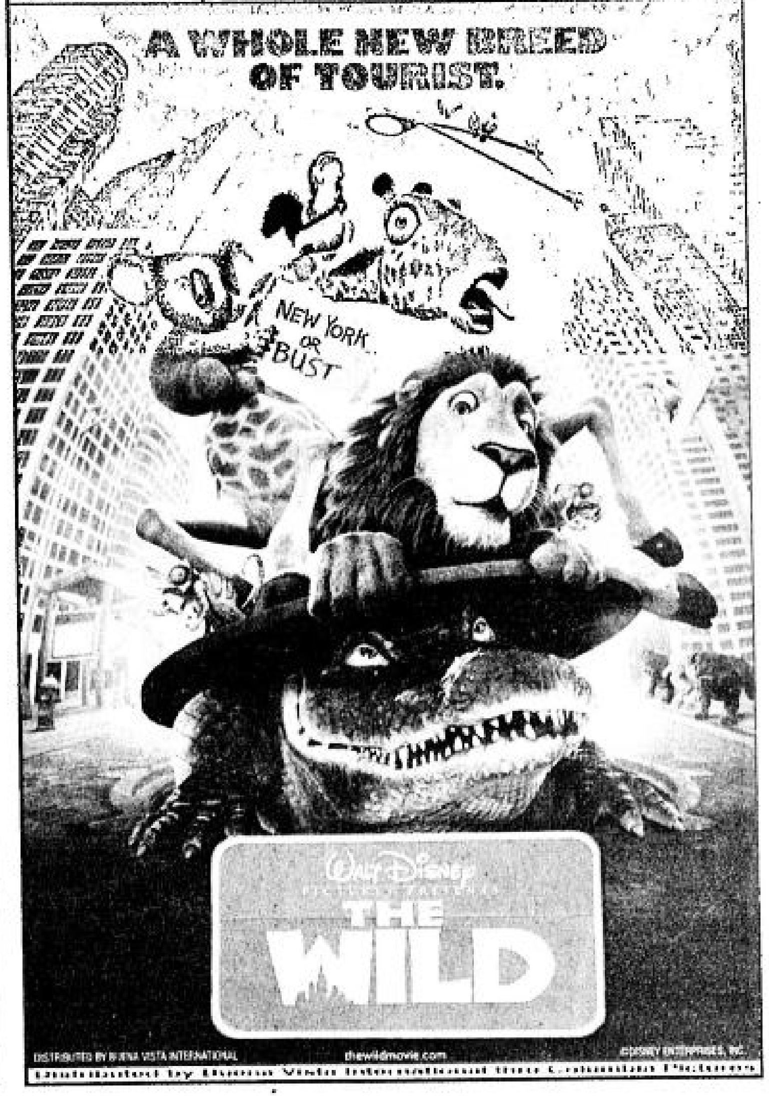
VIVA www.viva.com.ph Gold Circle UNIVERSAL

NOW SHOWING

NOW SHOWING

MTRCB RATING ▶ G | ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED


A WHOLE NEW BREED OF TOURIST.
NEW YORK OR BUST
Walt Disney Pictures presents
THE WILD
DISTRIBUTED BY BUENA VISTA INTERNATIONAL
thewildmovie.com
©DISNEY ENTERPRISES, INC.

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.

MICHAEL DOUGLAS KIEFER SUTHERLAND
EVA LONGORIA KIM BASINGER

The SENTINEL

IN 141 YEARS, THERE'S NEVER BEEN A TRAITOR IN THE SECRET SERVICE...UNTIL NOW.

NOW SHOWING

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777

THX

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 D' LUCKY ONES	2 SENTINEL	3 SLITHER	4 SILENT HILL
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 SLITHER	2 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS	3 THX SENTINEL GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 PAMAHIIN	5 EIGHT BELOW	6 THE WILD	7 SILENT HILL
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS	2 SENTINEL		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE WILD GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX SENTINEL GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 TRISTAN & ISOLDE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS GUARANTEED SEATS	5 SLITHER GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX SENTINEL	2 SLITHER		
	3 THE WILD	4 SILENT HILL	5 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 SENTINEL	2 SLITHER	3 THE WILD	4 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 SENTINEL	2 SLITHER		
	3 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS	4 THE WILD	5 SILENT HILL	

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm
Greenbelt - 752 4853, from 11am to 12mn
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Jammin' with Disney April 27 to 30, 2006	Automatic Center Exhibit April 17 to May 2, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Fashion TV Model School April 29, 2006	Summer Fun for Moms & Kids: Arts & Crafts Workshop April 28 to 30, 2006

GREENBELT
A Day With An Artist
April 22 to 29, 2006

Greenbelt Onstage
Repertory Philippines presents TWO & TWO MAKE SEX
at REP's Globe Theater - April 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, May 5, 6 & 7
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM
Registration is now ongoing for Ayala Museum's Summer Art Festival Workshop 2006
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

TOM CRUISE
M:i:III
THE MISSION BEGINS MAY 3

BUY YOUR TICKETS IN ADVANCE NOW

Visit our ticketbooths in GLORIETTA 4, GREENBELT 3, ALABANG TOWN CENTER, MARKET! MARKET! and AYALA CENTER CEBU Cinemas
Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservation.

OPENS MAY 3 AT ALL AYALA MALLS CINEMAS

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AYALA MALLS CINEMAS
Trippin' in 80 days

WANT TO BASK IN THE WHITE SANDY BEACHES OF PALAWAN FOR P90?

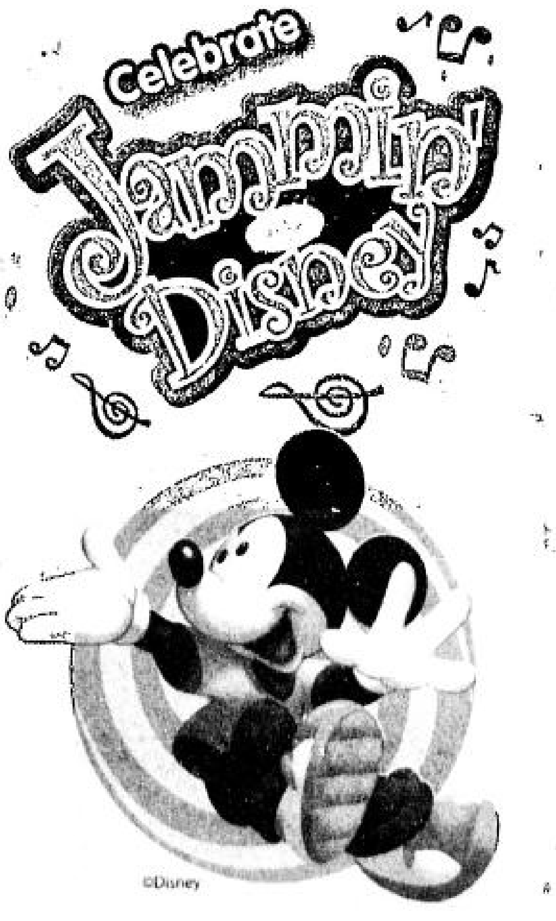
It's Easy! Join Ayala Cinemas' Trippin in 80 Days Raffle Promo and get a chance to win exciting all-expense paid trips to Cebu, Davao, and Palawan.

Get a coupon for every 2 tickets purchased at Glorietta and Greenbelt Cinemas and drop in dropboxes. Hurry! Watch a movie now!

Promo ends on May 19, 2006
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. AI-200, Series of 2006

Special thanks to: Club Noah Cebu Pacific The Travel Club

glorietta Greenbelt Ayala Malls



Come & join
Jumpin' Jam
A Live Musical Meet and Greet show with Mickey, Minnie, Donald, Goofy, Chip and Dale

glorietta
April 27, 28, 29, & 30, 2006
11 am, 1 pm, 3 pm, 5 pm
Activity Center
Customer Service Hotline: 752-7272

ALABANG TOWN
May 4, 5, 6, & 7, 2006
May 4 & 5:
12 pm, 2 pm, 3:30 pm, 6 pm
May 6 & 7:
12 pm, 1:30pm, 3:30 pm, 5 pm, 6:30 pm
Activity Center
Customer Service Hotline:
842-2782 • 772-1860

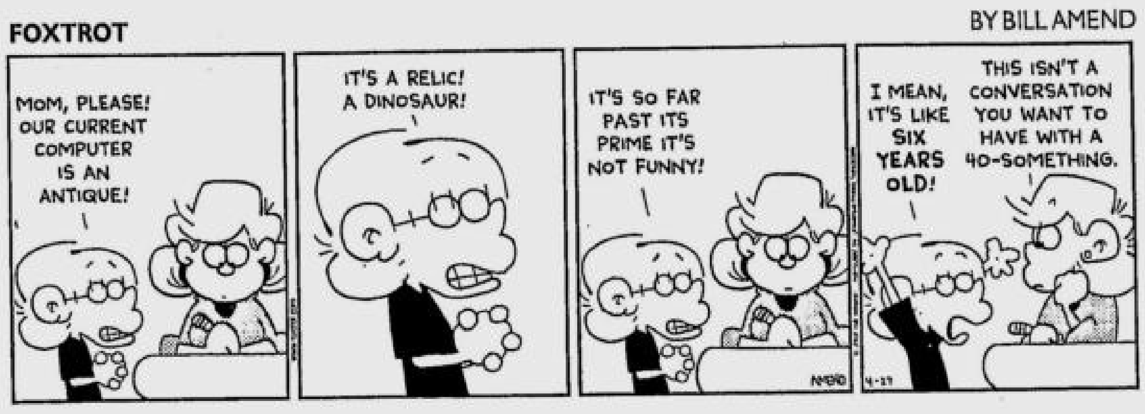
MARKET! MARKET!
May 11, 12, 13, & 14, 2006
12 pm, 2:30 pm, 4:30 pm, 6:30 pm
Activity Center
Customer Service Hotline: 886-7519

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Where Cebu's heart beats
May 18, 19, 20, & 21, 2006
1 pm, 3 pm, 5 pm, 7 pm
Activity Center
Customer Service Hotline:
(032) 231-5342 loc 324

Explore the world of your favorite Disney Characters, Princess Castle, Playhouse Disney, Disney/Pixar's CARS Racetrack, Fairies Enchanted Forest, W.I.T.C.H. The Krandakar Maze from April 27 to May 31!

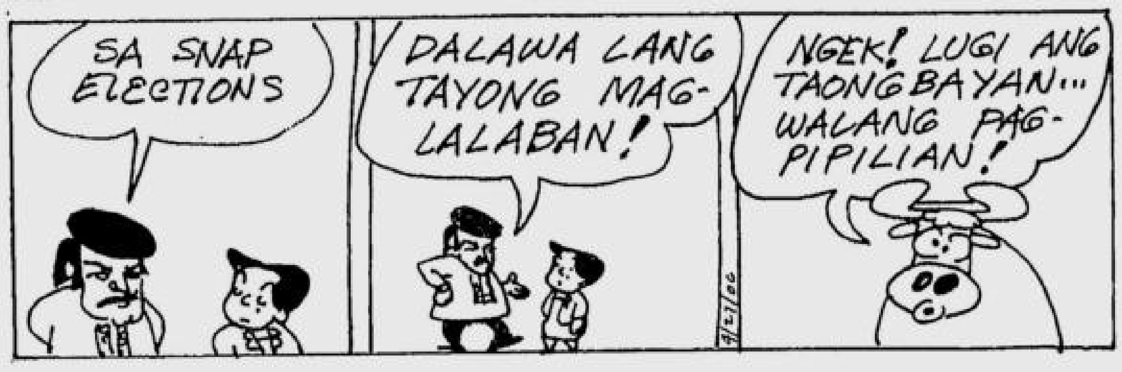
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


MOM, PLEASE! OUR CURRENT COMPUTER IS AN ANTIQUE!
IT'S A RELIC! A DINOSAUR!
IT'S SO FAR PAST ITS PRIME IT'S NOT FUNNY!
I MEAN, IT'S LIKE SIX YEARS OLD!
THIS ISN'T A CONVERSATION YOU WANT TO HAVE WITH A 40-SOMETHING.
AMEND
4-27

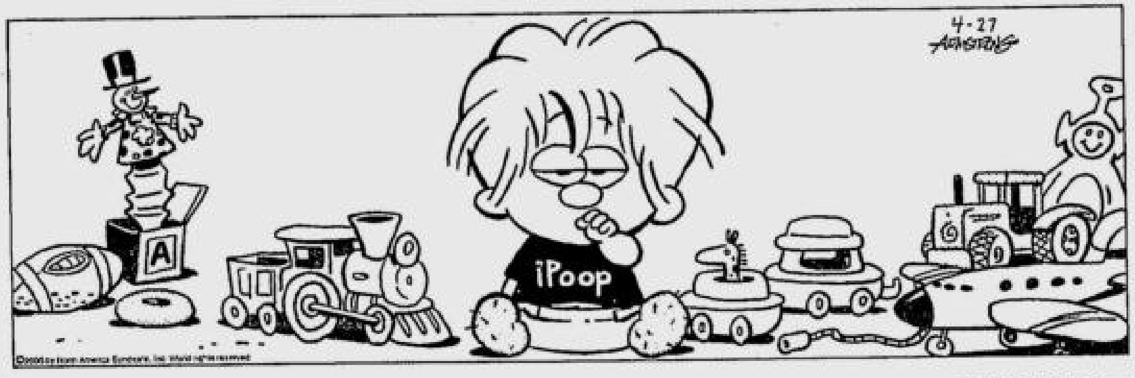
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


SA SNAP ELECTIONS
DALAWA LANG TAYONG MAG-LALABAN!
NGEK! LUGI ANG TAONGBAYAN... WALANG PAG-PIPILIAN!
4/27/06

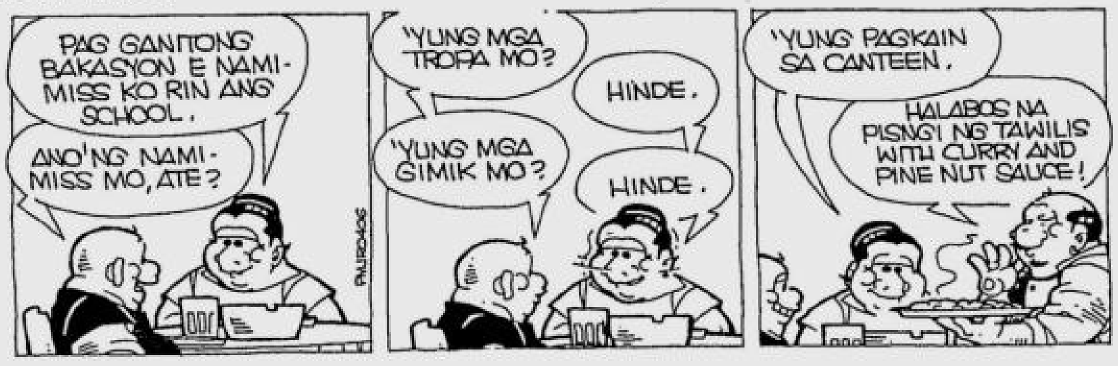
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


4-27
ARMSTRONG
A
iPoop

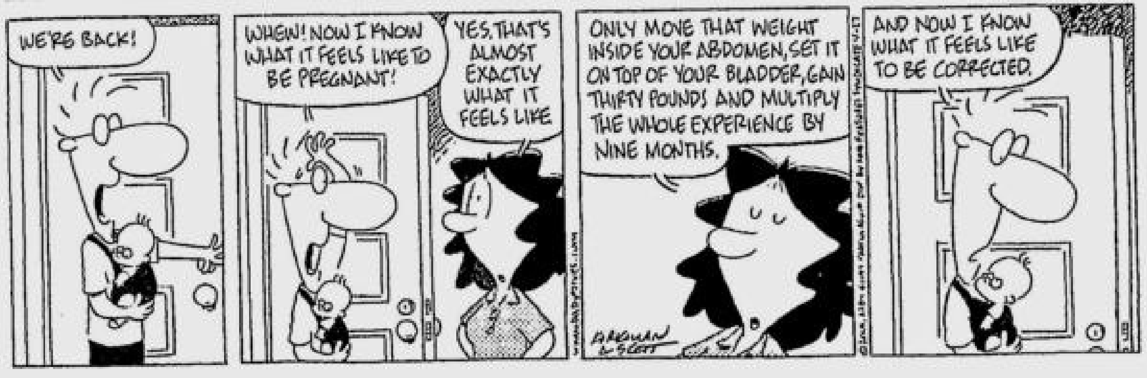
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PAG GANITONG BAKASYON E NAMI-MISS KO RIN ANG SCHOOL.
ANO'NG NAMI-MISS MO, ATE?
'YUNG MGA TROPA MO?
HINDE.
'YUNG MGA GIMIK MO?
HINDE.
'YUNG PAGKAIN SA CANTEEN.
HALABOS NA PISNGI NG TAWILIS WITH CURRY AND PINE NUT SAUCE!
PAJUNIOR

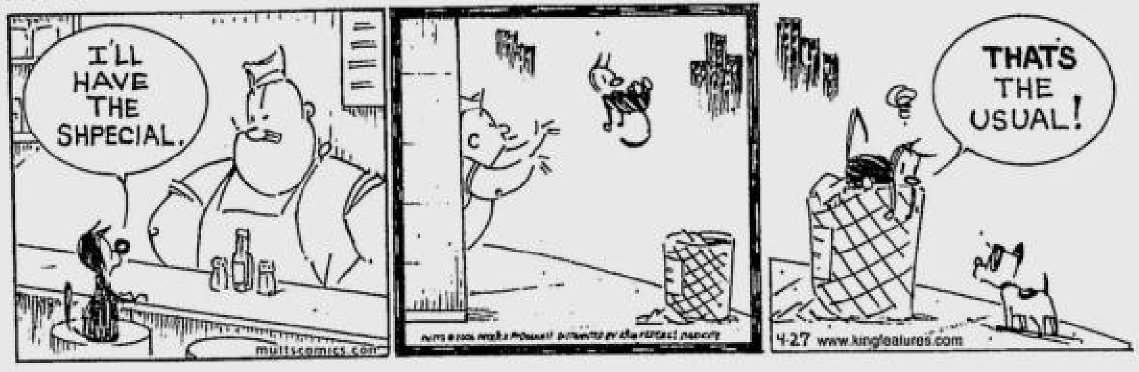
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WE'RE BACK!
WHEW! NOW I KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE PREGNANT!
YES, THAT'S ALMOST EXACTLY WHAT IT FEELS LIKE
ONLY MOVE THAT WEIGHT INSIDE YOUR ABDOMEN, SET IT ON TOP OF YOUR BLADDER, GAIN THIRTY POUNDS AND MULTIPLY THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE BY NINE MONTHS.
AND NOW I KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE CORRECTED.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

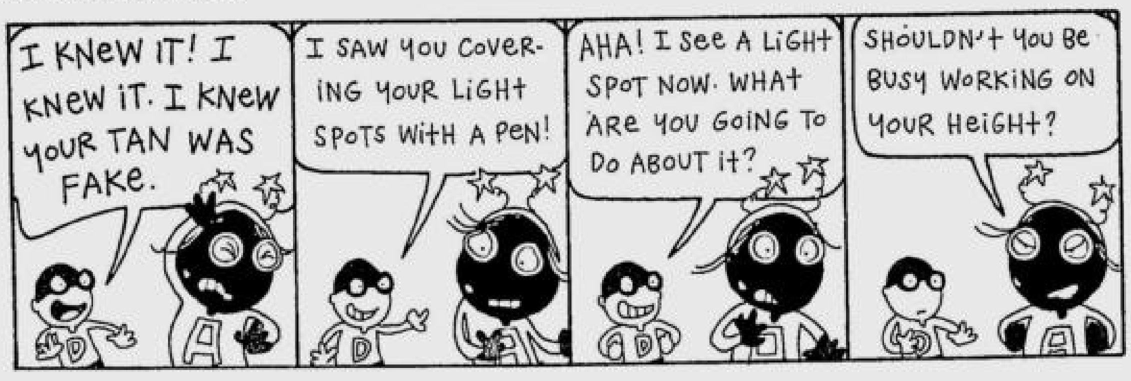
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I'LL HAVE THE SHPECIAL.
THAT'S THE USUAL!
muttscomics.com
4·27 www.kingfeatures.com

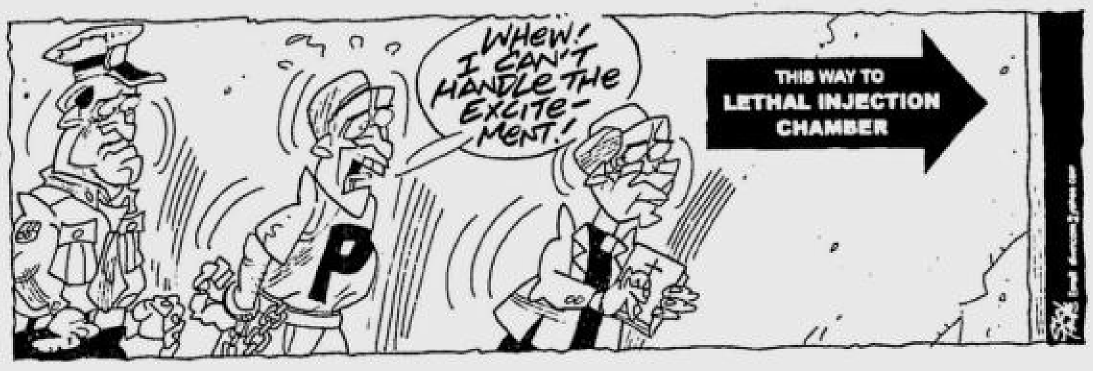
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT. I KNEW YOUR TAN WAS FAKE.
I SAW YOU COVER-ING YOUR LIGHT SPOTS WITH A PEN!
AHA! I SEE A LIGHT SPOT NOW. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?
SHOULDN'T YOU BE BUSY WORKING ON YOUR HEIGHT?
D
A

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


WHEW! I CAN'T HANDLE THE EXCITE-MENT!
THIS WAY TO LETHAL INJECTION CHAMBER
P

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You love your creature comforts. You're shrewd about financial matters. You have a marvelous stick-to-itiveness; you're not a quitter. You appreciate beauty and art. Your early adulthood is marked by an eagerness to learn and a desire to travel. By the age of 54, you want to feel settled in your home. An important choice awaits you this year. Choose wisely.

Birthdate of: Anouk Aimee, actress; Jack Klugman, actor; Coretta Scott King, civil-rights activist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Think about how to use your earnings, resources and possessions wisely and to your best advantage. To get ahead and stay ahead, you have to use your head!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is the only New Moon in your sign all year. Now is the time to take a hard look in the mirror and decide how to improve your appearance.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Are you able to identify any self-defeating habits you have? (We all have them.) Today's New Moon offers you a window of opportunity to do this.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Are you happy with your friends? You're responsible for the people you attract. Do you wait for others to make the first move, or do you make a move?

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a good time to take stock of your life and see if it's going in the direction you want. Do you need new skills to go further?

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your training and education, your philosophy of life and your attitudes will determine your career success. Is there something you want to work on here?

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Today's New Moon forces you to look at how self-reliant you are, and how dependent upon others you will let yourself be. What is your debt situation?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Did you know that you attract the very people who affirm your beliefs about partnerships? In other words, if you think people are going to use you, you'll attract takers. (Hmmm.)

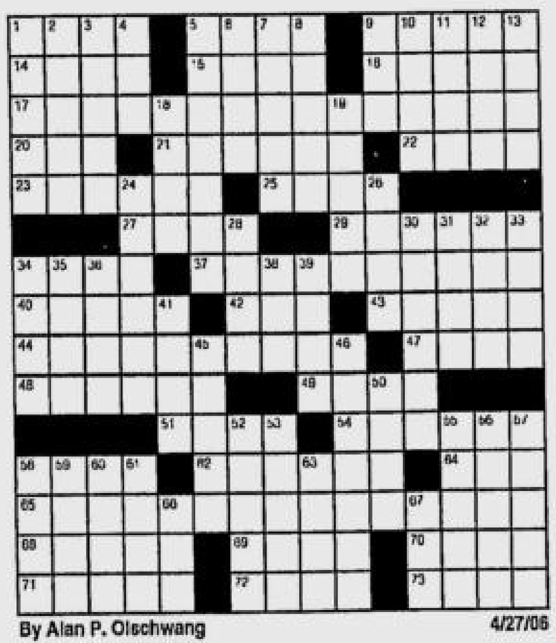
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Good health is a balance between your mind and body. You cannot ignore this. One doesn't work without the other. Today's New Moon offers you a chance to listen to your body.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Creativity isn't the domain of only experts and artists. Expressing your creativity has nothing to do with earning money. It's just a simple joy.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This New Moon focuses on your youth and your past. The past is gone; you can't change it. You only have the present and future.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): The point about communicating to others is to be understood. It's not just about talking and saying words. Are you clear in all your communications? Think about this.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

4/27/06

ACROSS

1 Blanchett of "Elizabeth"
5 Medieval club
9 Lava before exposure
14 Muscat's place
15 Israeli port
16 Havelock or Perry
17 Start of Abe Lincoln quip
20 Sort of cream?
21 Type of acid
22 Don't go
23 Eye membrane
25 Recorded proceedings
27 Misfortunes
29 Snare
34 Part 2 of quip
37 Part 3 of quip
40 Novel writing?
42 Quid __ quo
43 Calyx part
44 Part 4 of quip
47 Part 5 of quip
48 Poetic form
49 Lady of Spain
51 Worf of "Star Trek: TNG"
54 Winter apple
58 Lhasa __
62 Cooks in the oven
64 Refrain syllable
65 End of quip
68 Seasonal worker
69 Funnyman Laurel
70 Bruhn of ballet
71 Provide with a source of income
72 French actor Jacques
73 Dregs

DOWN

1 Like dunce caps
2 BP merger partner
3 More docile
4 Bambi's aunt
5 Laurie of "Roseanne"
6 To shelter
7 Magna __
8 System of moral values
9 West Coast seagull
10 Supplicant's request
11 Oversupply
12 Isinglass
13 Soot-covered
18 Old Chinese money
19 Two quartets combined
24 Maxima maker
26 Emmets
28 Mini drinks
30 Greek letters
31 "__ Man," Stanton film
32 Part of U.A.E.
33 Soccer great
34 Audit pros
35 Singer Guthrie
36 Commercial district
38 Coll. seniors' test
39 Busted clods
41 Watched closely
45 Tale
46 Cocktail choice
50 Requisite
52 Perch
53 Tariff-eliminating pact
55 Cubic meter
56 Banks of baseball
57 Jobs to do
58 Church part
59 A, e.g.
60 Broadcast
61 Suspicious of
63 Three-handed card game
66 Shooter marble
67 AT&T part

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

S	L	A	N	G		A	B	E	T		S	C	A	T
T	I	B	E	R		M	O	L	E		C	A	N	E
E	L	E	N	A		B	R	A	M		O	L	G	A
			E	N	S	I	G	N	P	U	L	V	E	R
A	S	S		O	P	T			E	L	D	E	R	S
M	A	N	I	L	A		T	A	R	A	S			
P	R	I	V	A	T	E	R	Y	A	N		R	A	H
L	A	D	Y			S	O	L			J	E	D	I
E	N	F		C	A	P	T	A	I	N	H	O	O	K
			B	A	R	N	S		D	E	S	I	R	E
I	N	F	O	R	M			D	E	A		L	E	D
S	E	R	G	E	A	N	T	Y	O	R	K			
A	R	E	A		D	E	A	L		E	E	R	I	E
A	V	E	R		A	S	T	A		S	N	A	R	L
C	Y	S	T		S	T	A	N		T	O	D	A	Y

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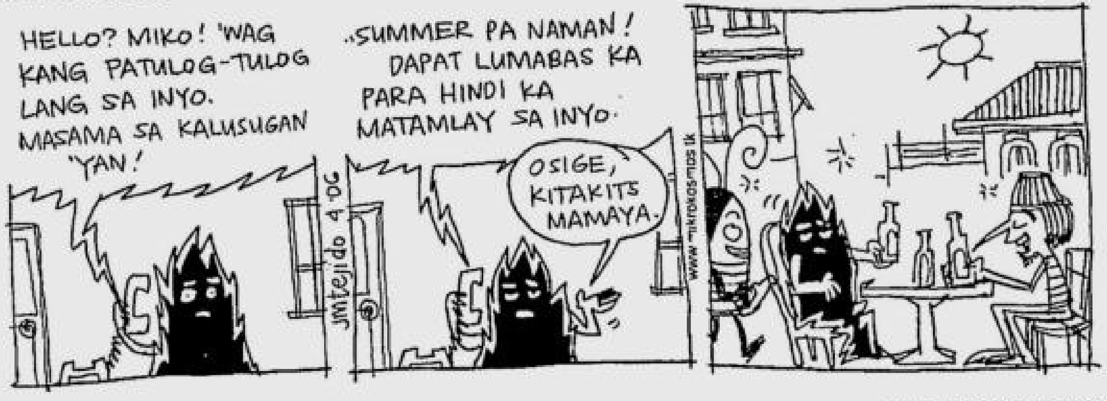
4/27/06

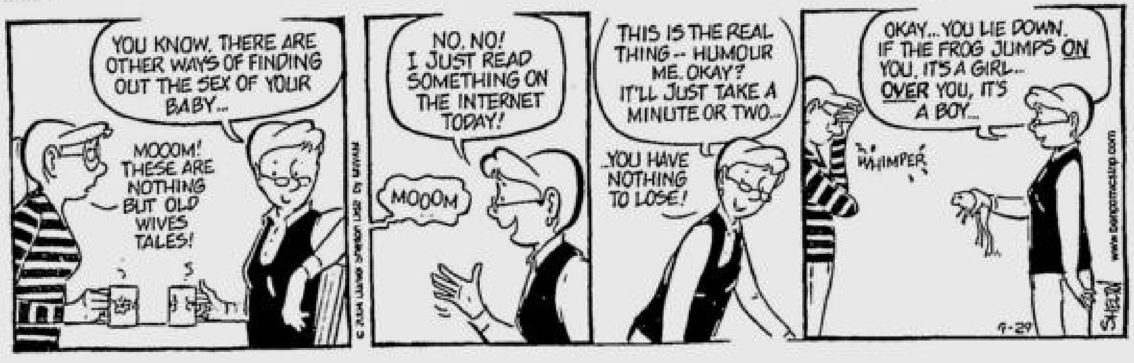
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


HELLO? MIKO! 'WAG KANG PATULOG-TULOG LANG SA INYO. MASAMA SA KALUSUGAN 'YAN!
..SUMMER PA NAMAN! DAPAT LUMABAS KA PARA HINDI KA MATAMLAY SA INYO.
OSIGE, KITAKITS MAMAYA.
jmtejido 4 06

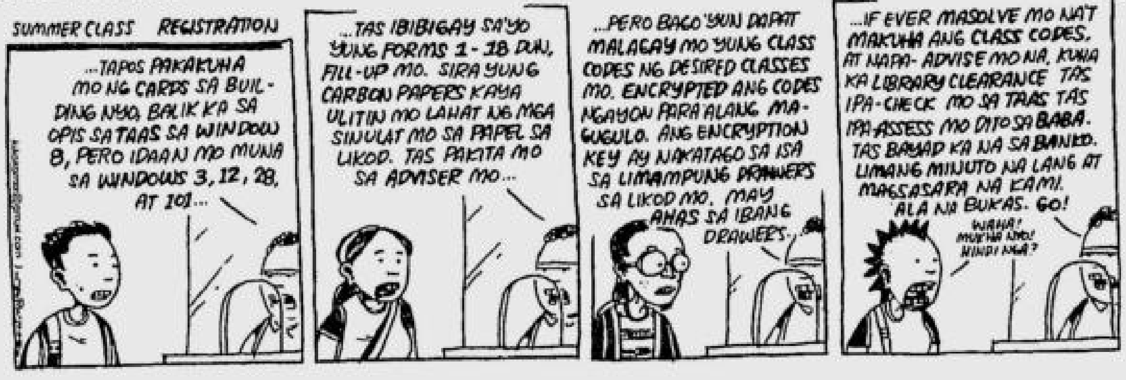
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


YOU KNOW, THERE ARE OTHER WAYS OF FINDING OUT THE SEX OF YOUR BABY...
MOOOM! THESE ARE NOTHING BUT OLD WIVES TALES!
NO, NO! I JUST READ SOMETHING ON THE INTERNET TODAY!
MOOOM
THIS IS THE REAL THING -- HUMOUR ME, OKAY? IT'LL JUST TAKE A MINUTE OR TWO...
..YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE!
OKAY... YOU LIE DOWN. IF THE FROG JUMPS ON YOU, IT'S A GIRL... OVER YOU, IT'S A BOY...
WHIMPER
4-29
SHELTON

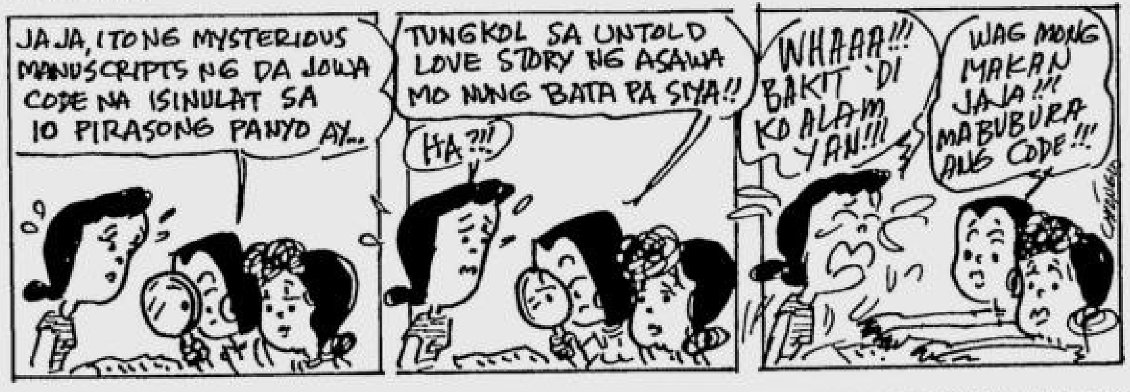
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


SUMMER CLASS REGISTRATION
...TAPOS PAKAKUHA MO NG CARDS SA BUILDING NYO, BALIK KA SA OPIS SA TAAS SA WINDOW 8, PERO IDAAN MO MUNA SA WINDOWS 3, 12, 28, AT 101...
...TAS IBIBIGAY SA'YO 'YUNG FORMS 1 - 18 DUN, FILL-UP MO. SIRA YUNG CARBON PAPERS KAYA ULITIN MO LAHAT NG MGA SINULAT MO SA PAPEL SA LIKOD. TAS PAKITA MO SA ADVISER MO...
...PERO BAGO 'YUN DAPAT MALAGAY MO YUNG CLASS CODES NG DESIRED CLASSES MO. ENCRYPTED ANG CODES NGAYON PARA ALANG MAGULO. ANG ENCRYPTION KEY AY NAKATAGO SA ISA SA LIMAMPUNG DRAWERS SA LIKOD MO. MAY AHAS SA IBANG DRAWERS.
...IF EVER MASOLVE MO NA'T MAKUHA ANG CLASS CODES, AT NAPA-ADVISE MO NA, KUNA KA LIBRARY CLEARANCE TAS IPA-CHECK MO SA TAAS TAS IPA-ASSESS MO DITO SA BABA. TAS BAYAD KA NA SA BANKO. LIMANG MINUTO NA LANG AT MAGSASARA NA KAMI. ALA NA BUKAS. GO!
WAHA! MUKHA NYO! HINDI NGA?

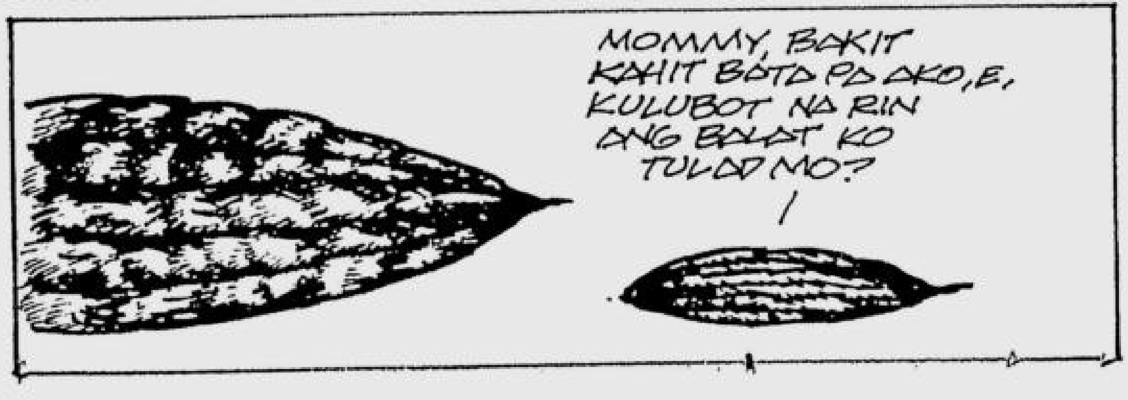
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, ITONG MYSTERIOUS MANUSCRIPTS NG DA JOWA CODE NA ISINULAT SA 10 PIRASONG PANYO AY...
TUNGKOL SA UNTOLD LOVE STORY NG ASAWA MO NUNG BATA PA SIYA!!
HA?!!
WHAAA!!! BAKIT 'DI KO ALAM YAN!!!
WAG MONG MAKAN JAJA!!! MABUBURA ANG CODE!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


MOMMY, BAKIT KAHIT BATA PA AKO, E, KULUBOT NA RIN ANG BALAT KO TULAD MO?

BAMBOO

SHOW TIME

Winston series 3

FOR THE THIRD consecutive year, Winston brings to Boracay its "Summer Music Blast."

This year's event happens on two Saturdays—April 29 and May 13.

Lineup for the first weekend includes Freestyle and True Faith. For the second event, Bamboo and Sugarfree are the main attractions at the Cocomangas.

Only those 18 years and older will be admitted to the parties.

Today

Randy Santiago at Ratsky Malate

Cueshe at Ratsky Morato

Abrakadabra at RJ Guitar Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

Mocha at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Tomorrow

Kim Flores at the Ynares Center in Antipolo

Nyoy Volante at Metropolis Star Alabang; 7 p.m.

RJ 'n Friends with the Members Band at RJ Guitar Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

9th Avenue at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Acoustic Jive at Merk's

April 29

Philip Lazaro at the newly opened Gagalocah Comedy Music Bar, Pasig City.

Kim Flores at the Mr. Golf Driving Range in Pampanga

Mr. God and Company at RJ Guitar Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

Nyoy Volante at Cuba Libre Latin Bar, Starmall Edsa; 9 p.m.

Tribe of Levi at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Flintstones and the Gang at Merk's

Pupil and Sandwich at MTV and Motorola "Mobbed" event in Boracay

Join the Club at Robinson's Place Pioneer

Rage at Ratsky Morato

April 30

Douglas Nierras Powerdance in "Powerdancing in the Dark" at the Meralco Theater

Pupil and Sandwich at MTV and Motorola "Mobbed" event in Boracay

Shamrock at Metropolis Star Alabang; 5 p.m.

AiAi Delas Alas' Maggi Magic Sarap Palengke Tour at La Paz Public Market and Jaro Plaza, Iloilo

Join the Club at Robinson's Starmills Pampanga

May 1

Douglas Nierras Powerdance in "Powerdancing in the Dark" at the Meralco Theater

---

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M:i:III
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Barbie Diaries
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MARILAO * MOLINO* BATANGAS * LUCENA * CEBU * DAVAO* CAGAYAN DE ORO
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METRO MANILA

PODIUM

SENTINEL
11:30 FS / 11:55 MF / 02:10
04:25 / 06:40 / 08:30LFS
09:00 LMF / 10:50 END

THE WILD
12:15 FS / 12:40 MF / 02:40
04:40 / 06:40 / 8:10LFS
08:40 LMF / 10:05 END

SM MEGACINEMA

SENTINEL
10:15FS / 10:45 MF / 01:00
03:15 / 05:30 / 07:45
09:35LFS / 10:00 LMF
11:50 END

2 SILENT HILL
3 THE WILD
4 RESERVED
5 EIGHT BELOW
6 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
7 SUBMERGED
8 ICE AGE 2
9 PAMAHIIN
10 D LUCKY ONES
11 MOMENTS OF LOVE
12 TRISTAN & ISOLDE

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

1 SENTINEL
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 PAMAHIIN
4 THE WILD
5 SUBMERGED
6 EIGHT BELOW
7 SILENT HILL
8 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 PAMAHIIN
2 THE WILD
3 SENTINEL
4 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
2 SUBMERGED
3 VENOM
4 SILENT HILL
5 PAMAHIIN
6 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
7 SENTINEL
8 THE WILD
9 ICE AGE 2
10 EIGHYT BELOW
11 MOMENTS OF LOVE
12 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY STA. MESA

1 SILENT HILL
2 THE WILD
3 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
4 D LUCKY ONES
5 SENTINEL
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE
7 EIGHT BELOW
8 PAMAHIIN
9 ICE AGE 2
10 SUBMERGED

SM CITY BICUTAN

1 SENTINEL
2 THE WILD
3 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
4 SILENT HILL

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

1 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
2 SILENT HILL
3 THE WILD
4 SENTINEL
5 D LUCKY ONES
6 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY MANILA

1 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
2 SUBMERGED
3 VENOM
4 EIGHYT BELOW
5 THE WILD
6 SENTINEL
7 PAMAHIIN
8 ICE AGE 2
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
11 D LUCKY ONES
12 SILENT HILL

SM CITY SOUTHMALL

1 SENTINEL
2 THE WILD
3 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
4 SILENT HILL
5 ICE AGE 2
6 D LUCKY ONES
7 EIGHT BELOW
8 PAMAHIIN
9 SUBMERGED

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA

1 SILENT HILL
2 SENTINEL
3 THE WILD
4 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

SM CITY SUCAT

1 THE WILD
2 PAMAHIIN
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 SILENT HILL

SM CITY BAGUIO

SENTINEL
D LUCKY ONES
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
THE WILD

SM CITY MARILAO

BANDIDAS
PAMAHIIN
D LUCKY ONES
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

SM CITY BATANGAS

1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 PAMAHIIN
4 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

LUZON

SM CITY BACOOR

1 SUBMERGED
2 PAMAHIIN
3 SILENT HILL
4 THE WILD
5 EIGHT BELOW
6 D LUCKY ONES
7 SENTINEL
8 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

SM CITY STA. ROSA

1 D LUCKY ONES
2 THE WILD
3 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
4 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY PAMPANGA

1 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
2 SENTINEL
3 THE WILD
4 D LUCKY ONES
5 BANDIDAS
6 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY LUCENA

1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 BANDIDAS
3 JUST FRIENDS
4 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY MOLINO

1 SENTINEL
2 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY CEBU

1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
4 SENTINEL
5 JUST FRIENDS
6 THE WILD
7 D LUCKY ONES
8 EIGHT BELOW

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO

1 JUST FRIENDS
2 RESERVED
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 SILENT HILL
5 PAMAHIIN
6 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
7 RESERVED
8 TRISTAN & ISOLDE

SM CITY DAVAO

1 SENTINEL
2 PAMAHIIN
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
5 D LUCKY ONES
6 THE WILD

SM CITY CAGAYAN

1 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
2 THE WILD
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 EIGHT BELOW

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DTI-Batangas 051 Series of 2006

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1 BASIC INSTINCT 2 • THX
2 THE SENTINEL
3 SILENT HILL
4 THE WILD
5 SLITHER
6 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
7 EIGHT BELOW
8 PAMAHIIN
9 D' LUCKY ONES
10 SUBMERGED

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 WHENA STRANGER CALLS
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 PAMAHIIN
4 SILENT HILL
5 THE SENTINEL
6 SLITHER
7 THE WILD

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 EIGHT BELOW
2 SILENT HILL
3 THE WILD
4 D' LUCKY ONES
5 THE SENTINEL
6 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
7 SLITHER
8 PAMAHIIN

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 SILENT HILL
2 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
3 D' LUCKY ONES
4 THE WILD
5 SLITHER
6 THE SENTINEL

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 RESERVED
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
2 SLITHER
3 THE WILD
4 THE SENTINEL

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2 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
3 THE WILD
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1 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
2 PAMAHIIN
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 D' LUCKY ONES
5 ULTRAVIOLET

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1 SLITHER
2 PAMAHIIN
3 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
4 THE SENTINEL
5 THE WILD

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 SLITHER
2 THE SENTINEL
3 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
4 THE WILD

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 PAMAHIIN
2 SILENT HILL
3 SLITHER
4 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
5 THE SENTINEL
6 THE WILD

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1 SLITHER
2 SENTINEL
3 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
4 PAMAHIIN
5 THE WILD
6 BANDIDAS

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
2 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
3 D' LUCKY ONES
4 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
5 PAMAHIIN
6 FINAL DESTINATION 3

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
2 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
3 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
4 SILENT HILL
5 D' LUCKY ONES
6 BASIC INSTINCT 2

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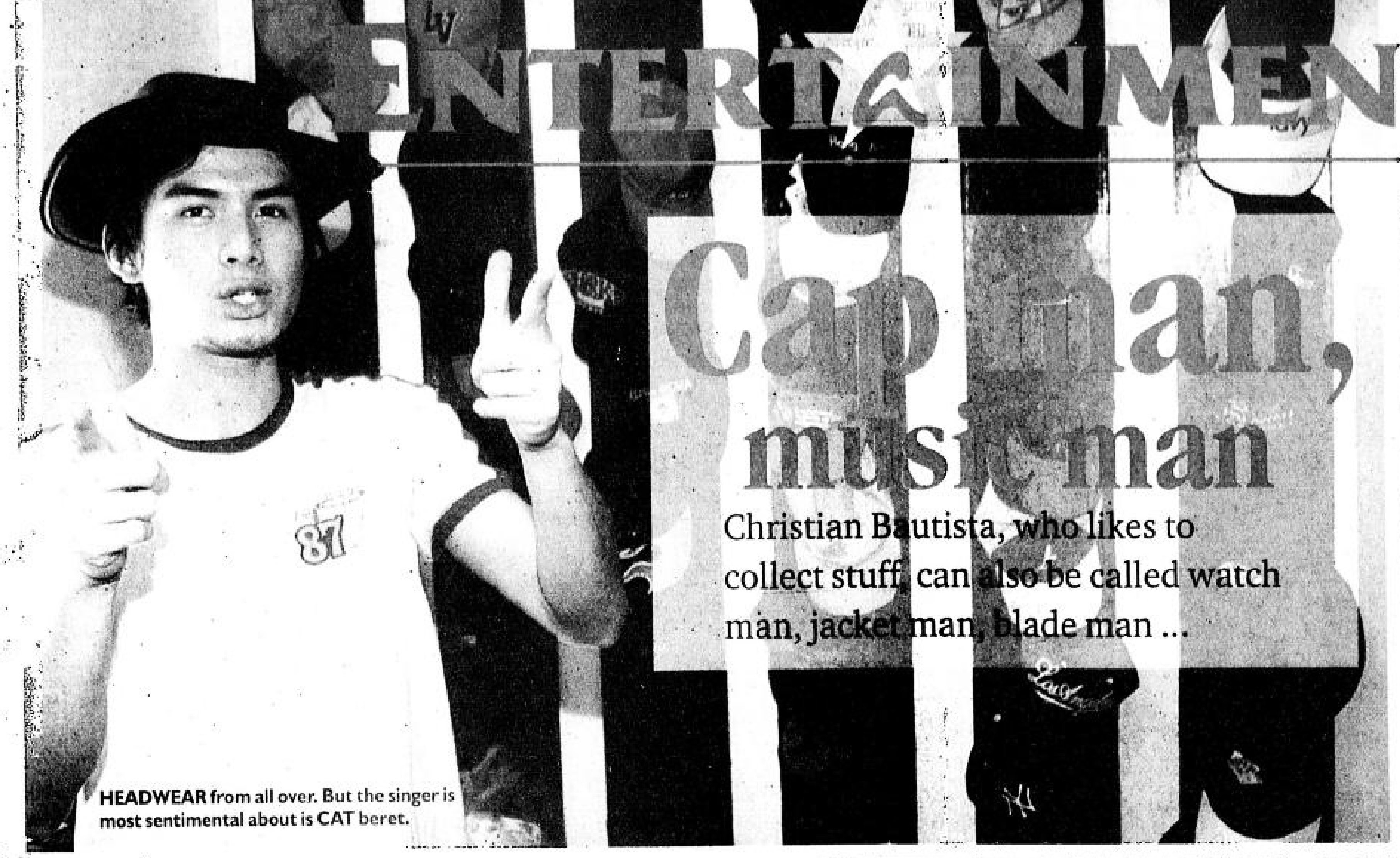
ENTERTAINMENT

Cap man, music man

Christian Bautista, who likes to collect stuff, can also be called watch man, jacket man, blade man ...



HEADWEAR from all over. But the singer is most sentimental about is CAT beret.

A WHOLE roomful of shoes, and he picks these wooden slippers from Japan!

OUT OF THE CLOSET

By Marinel R. Cruz
and Sheena Jade Barrion
Photos by Jim Gulao Punzalan

NOW THAT WORD IS OUT about his romance with Rachelle Ann Go, singing champ Christian Bautista seems more relaxed.

In an interview on the show biz talk program "The Buzz," Christian and Rachelle, herself an award-winning singer, finally admitted they had been playing sweet music together for some time now.

Christian told INQUIRER Entertainment that keeping it a secret had been hard for both of them. In this interview at the Bautista compound in Imus, Cavite, last week, he said, "She had a lot of suitors. I know all of them; I work with some of these guys. There were times when I felt jealous."

Rachelle left three weeks ago for a series of shows in Canada. Christian said they communicate by phone or e-mail. "Because of the different time zones, we seldom get to talk," he said.

According to him, the romance blossomed a year ago when they worked on the Sunday variety show "Asap," and then toured the United States with fellow singing champs Eric Santos, Mark Bautista and Frenchie Dy.

"I like Rachelle because she's very lively and fun to be with," Christian said.

BOOKS

Right now, I'm into Tom Clancy books. But I've been a fan of "Lord of the Rings" way before it became a movie. My dad introduced me to "The Hobbit" when I was in high school.

My brothers and I are into science fiction and fantasy. We're fans of "Star Wars." We have loads of "Star Wars" and "Dune" books in our library.

SUITS/JACKETS

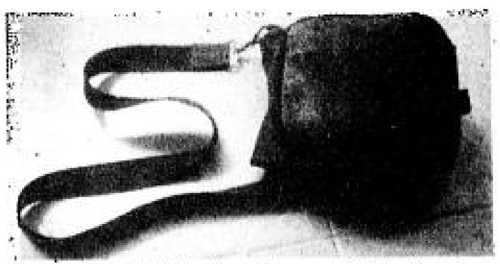
"This suit is special because I wore it when I performed in Sharon Cuneta's Valentine concert. It's from Celio. I picked this because I noticed that while everyone was wearing light-colored suits and gowns, I was always in black.

"This black curdoroy jacket is from a night market in Taiwan. I got it at half its original price. It's very versatile, being in between formal and informal. I've not worn it; I'm waiting for the right occasion.

Guess for how much I got this (shows a funky brown leather jacket)? Five hundred? Close. Actually, P700. I'm very proud of this. I bought this at Robinson's Imus.

TOPS

The yellow plaid long-sleeved top is a gift from my mom. She bought it in Thailand. My mom says I should always buy something—clothes, specifically—from places we visit so when I use them here, *walang kapareho.*



Sling bag of old leather, from a thrift shop in Chicago.

I think this is made from piña fabric (shows a purple long- sleeved button-down shirt). I wore this for Kuh Ledesma's tribute to George Canseco. I'm not sure who made this, though.

I like the style of this tie-dyed shirt from People Are People. It's very funky. I wore this for Rachelle's concert.

JEANS

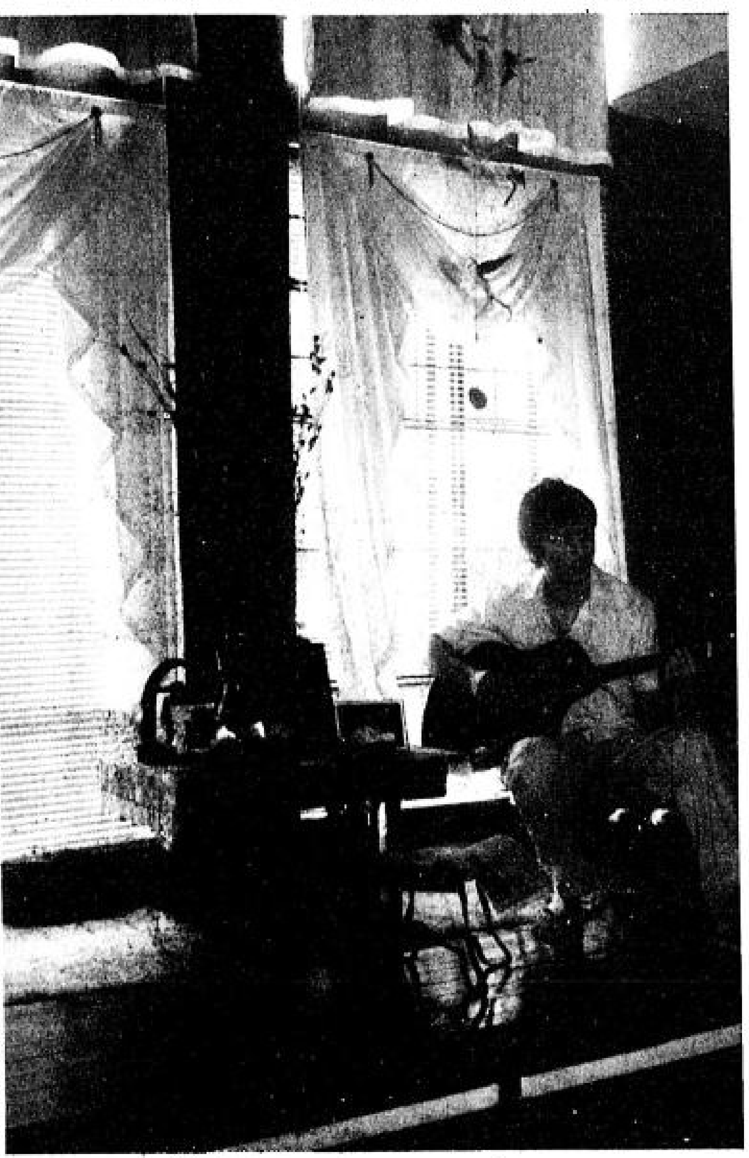
The pair I'm wearing right now is my favorite because it's tattered—perfect for summer. It's from Bench. This looks really funky when worn with a top under a suit or vest.

When I buy jeans, I go for the straight cuts. I don't want them too baggy. I have skinny legs. I don't want to look like an ice cream bar.

WATCHES

My current favorite is this black-and-red leather watch from Swatch. I like its unique design, especially its silver chain bracelet. *Pang-rocker.*

The latest one I got is this diver's watch that's perfect for summer. It's water resistant and can be used up to 200 meters under water.



For formal occasions, I use my chrome watches--*para kita agad.* For casual events, I like earth colors. Sometimes I go for wild tones like yellow, red or army green.

Those of you who want to start a collection, get different colors and styles. Of course, function is also important.

FOOTWEAR

I bought my Havaianas in Hawaii for $10. That's pretty cheap, considering that these are sold for P800 here.

I bought this pair of wooden slippers in Japan. It's the custom there to take off your footwear when you enter a house. You wear one of these. Too bad this is kind of small for me.

Most of my shoes are from Skechers. I like the brand not only because I endorse it but also because it always comes up with unique styles. My favorite pair is this grayish blue rubber shoes. The style is very modern.

Buy for comfort. Try it on. Some shoes are good to look at, but when you wear them your feet hurt.

Also, experiment with new styles. Don't always go for the same boring style.

If you're on a tight budget, buy those that look good with different outfits.

BAG

My favorite is this sling bag that I got from a thrift store in Chicago. It cost me only $10. I like it because it's old leather—not your typical bag.

CAPS/HATS

My brothers and I buy hats from all the places we visit, like Las Vegas, Hollywood, New York, San Diego. We also have stuff from Hong Kong and Australia.

I still keep my Citizens Army Training beret. It holds precious memories. It reminds me of being in the school's Varsity unit—we were the untouchables, the war freaks. We weren't scared of the officers.

The cowboy hat is from Australia. Have you noticed that when you say cowboy, people now think, 'Brokeback Mountain'? I think that's sad for the cowboys.

OTHER COLLECTIONS

My brothers and I became interested in collecting bladed weapons after somebody gave us a set of knives as a gift. Another friend gave us *arnis.* Since then, we have been buying similar stuff wherever we go—Baguio, Subic, Mindanao, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand ...

Our newest one is this ancient hunting weapon—*panga ng baboy* (wild boar's jaw), from Baguio. It looks really cool.

This *sumpit* (bamboo musket) was made by *aetas* in Subic. They sell it on the beach for P800. I was so happy to get mine for P600. Then I learned it was being sold for P200 in the public market.

FUNCTION is important, says the inveterate collector of watches.

TIE-DYED long-sleeved shirt from People Are People.

BLACK curduroy jacket from a night market in Taiwan.

Better to lose a lover than to love a loser

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

LOOKS LIKE BIG BROTHER'S middle name is Cupid! Four former PBB housemates are now dating. Interestingly, the girls are from the first batch and the guys are from the celebrity edition. There must be a magic love spell in there that stayed on with the ex-housemates. The dating four are **John Pratts** and **Say Alonzo, Rico Robles** and **Nene Tamayo.** So that means **Nancy Castiglione, JB Magsaysay, Roxanne Barcelo** and **Bob de la Cruz** are no longer in the picture for John, Say, Rico and Nene respectively. Will Big Brother soon make a much-awaited personal appearance as *ninong* if and when his former housemates decide to play house for keeps?

Lover-less

Ruffa Mae Quinto is lover-less at the moment but an all-heart woman like her cannot be loveless for long. Peachy (her pet name) emotes and says, " I'm so *ngarag* preparing for my birthday concert (May 27 Aliw Theater), I miss having someone. At the same time, I'm happy to be free. The nice thing is, feel *na* feel *ko* the songs that I'm doing for my concert. Every line has more meaning!"

What about the commercial director being linked to her? "That fizzled before it began. Ergo, no BF. It gets very exhausting." Single women like Peach and myself are all too familiar with the dilemma of taking a bow or a vow. Oh well ... better to lose a lover than to love a loser.

Jolens in NY

New Yorkers who chanced upon **Jolina Magdangal** do a dramatic scene in Times Square for her upcoming TV series, "I Love NY," were reportedly so impressed that they gave Jolens a resounding applause (some were moved to tears). Jolens had been so carried away that she couldn't stop crying even after Direk **Louie Ignacio** had shouted "CUT!" Now Jolina can do a Minnelli and proudly sing "If I can make it there, I'll make it anywhere!"

No gap

Toni Gonzaga and **Mariel Rodriguez** have both clarified in "The Buzz" that they have no gap whatsoever. Talks of a rift started when Mariel replaced Toni as host of "Pinoy Big Brother." Toni will be busy shooting a movie with her soon-to-be (?) BF **Sam Milby.** She'll be back on the next "PBB." Some viewers may think their "Buzz" beso-beso was all for show. But I can vouch for their sincerity. I was beside Toni when she called Mariel right after "ETK" last Saturday. She asked Mariel about the rumor that she was caught kissing **Zanjo Marudo** in Boracay (which Mariel just laughed off). Whoever had the crazy idea that they were fighting, anyway?

Loco over Ilocos

It was my first time to visit Ilocos Norte. Profuse thanks to **Arlene de Guzman, Lyra Marcos, Ruel Santos, Athena Fariñas, Philp San Diego** and **Melody de la Cruz** for making my stay in Fort Ilocandia Resort worth the long trip. Endless thanks also to my beloved UP comrade **Ambet Nabus** and fun colleagues **Ador Saluta** and **Jimmy Navarro** and my newfound friends **Tita Dang, Tito Allan** and **Jill** for such a memorable Ilocos holiday. Highlight of my trip was bumping into my forever crush **Bongbong Marcos** (hope his wife doesn't mind ... hehe).

I was there for the Ms Fort Ilocandia '06 pageant. The ballroom was packed as the beauties sashayed in elegant creations by **Ariel Agasang.** The program was hosted by a long-missed friend, **Louie Heredia.** Several Chinese models and singers had flown in from Hong Kong to add glitter to the presentation.

And the winners are: fourth runner-up, **Cheryl Ramos,** third runner-up (who I think should have bagged the crown!) **Jill Arsemarie Bunaguen,** third runner-up; **Kimberly Hao,** second runner-up; **Angelene Montilla,** first runner-up; and Ms Fort Ilocandia '06, **Elizabeth Nacuspag.**

I felt like a beauty queen myself because of the red-carpet treatment they gave me at Fort Ilocandia. Everywhere I looked was breathtaking! They've got horseback riding, all kinds of water sports, air balloons, archery targets and a five-star casino. Who says the "Ilocanos" are *kuripot?*

'For M'

RPN 9's "Direct Line" has a new title and time slot—"For M," 11 a.m. Mondays. Join my good friend **Mr. Fu** and **Marigold Haber** as they give genuine public service to moms, *misis* and *mares.* The show's segments include "Tipid Muna Tips," "M Matters," "P.S. Mr. Fu," "May K Ka Mare," and "Certified Gold Ka Misis."

Sympathies

My deepest condolences to the family of **Chat Silayan.** I have fond memories of bonding with her when she joined Ms Universe in Seoul, Korea. She paid a courtesy call on my grandfather, who was ambassador at the time. *Mamimiss siya ng lahat maka*-CHAT *at ma*SILAYAN.

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BUSINESS

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PETRON

Surging crude, VAT push farm prices higher

Cost of rice, pork, chicken, fish affected

By Christine A. Gaylican

PRICES OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES WILL RISE BY AN average of 30 to 40 centavos a kilo due to the 12-percent expanded value-added tax and the recent 8-percent increase in fuel prices.

Despite assurances from economic managers that the VAT would have no impact on many food items, a study made by the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Agricultural Statistics pointed out that there would be an effect on prices especially of pork, chicken and fish.

As of April 24, according to data obtained from the Department of Agriculture, the projected impact of the VAT and the fuel price increase would be 37 centavos for ordinary rice, or to P21.13 a kilo from P20.76; 67 centavos for poultry to P98 from P97.33; and P1.48 for pork to P143.15 from P141.67. For tilapia, the increase would be 53 centavos to P68.46 a kilo from P67.93.

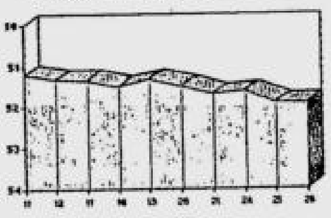
The study said the increase would arise from the additional production costs of a farmer from the purchase of seeds and fertilizers and post-production expenses. For poultry and hog raisers, an important factor considered was the post-production cost of transport and handling, which translated to an increase of an average 21 centavos a kilo of production.

"The other costs such as inputs like fertilizers have remained and only the VAT has made

SURGING/ B5

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



APRIL

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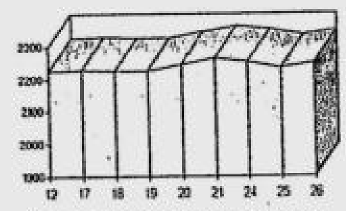
As of 5 p.m., April 26, 2006

GOLD: $631.80-632.30

per ounce Hong Kong, April 26, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Shares close higher

SHARE PRICES SNAPPED A two-day losing streak, closing 0.65 percent higher yesterday after the government distanced itself from a proposal to remove a key sales tax on petroleum products, dealers said.

The composite index rose 14.59 points at 2,247.14. It traded between 2,232.55 and 2,247.44. The broader all-shares index advanced 10.24 points to 1,388.18.

SHARES/ B6

Ratings upgrade not seen till '09

By Michelle V. Remo

ING INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT, A SUBsidiary of global financial institution ING Group, said the Philippines' debt burden remained unsustainable and that the government would have to significantly reduce it to get a credit-rating upgrade.

Rob Drijkoningen, head of ING's emerging markets debt group, said that at the rate the Philippines' fiscal reform program was going, it would take the country until 2009 to get an upgrade.

He noted that the national government's debt stood at 83 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), a figure much higher than what is considered a comfortable debt level. In absolute terms, the debt reached P3.88 trillion in end-2005.

Drijkoningen said a sustainable debt level should be below 50 percent of GDP. But he said the country should reduce its debt-to-GDP ratio to at least below 70 percent to get a credit-rating upgrade.

Under the government's fiscal program, its debt-to-GDP ratio would go down to 76.8 percent this year. It should further go down to 63 percent by 2008, to 56.5 percent in 2009 and to 50.8 percent by 2010.

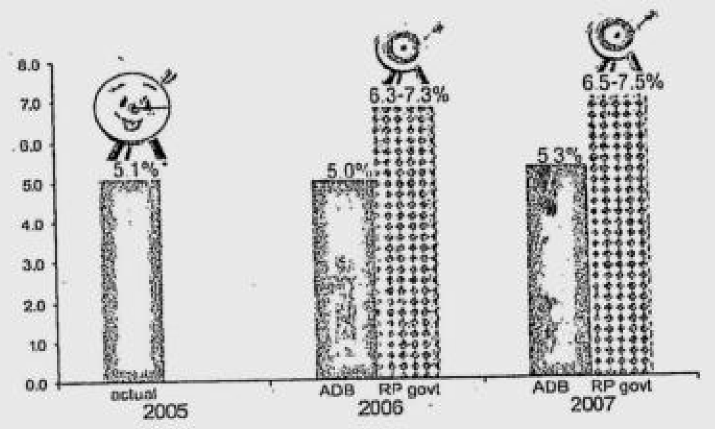
RATINGS/ B5

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

ADB: Little growth in next two years

Asian Development Bank's growth projections are lower than the Philippine government's targets as it sees a continued lag in investments. Also, growth prospects are limited as the country continues to rely mainly on consumption and remittances to drive the economy.



* Surpassed 4.8% gov't target

Source: Asian Development Outlook 2006, Asian Development Bank

Kate Pedroso PDI Research

WHAT'S INSIDE

Mining firms to reach out to CBCP, seek BBC help /B2

Survey shows SMEs expect to do well in '06 /B3

SSS eyes higher price for EPCIB stake

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS), THE country's private sector pension fund, reiterated that it would renegotiate the price at which it would sell its 29-percent stake in Equitable PCI Bank.

In 2004, the group of mall tycoon Henry Sy, through Banco De Oro Universal Bank, offered to buy the SSS block at P43.50.

"If we get clearance from the Supreme Court, depending on what their decision would be, obviously we will renegotiate. We will not sell at

SSS/ B5

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Mining firms to reach out to CBCP, seek BBC help

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A GROUP OF MINING FIRMS YESterday said it was seeking the help of the Bishops Businessmen's Conference to reach out to the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and solicit cooperation among all sectors that have a stake in the industry.

Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez, president of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, said the group wanted to develop a guidebook which would spell out what were required and expected of companies, local governments and communities with regard to mining activities.

"(The local industry) faces challenges about perception from different sectors but we [will] move forward with our projects," Romualdez said.

Mining firms were encouraged to move forward after they were assured by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that the review of the Philippine Mining Law will not touch on ownership but will only dwell on environmental concerns.

Mining firms suffered a blow when the influential CBCP issued a statement last January calling for a repeal of the Mining Act, recall of all approved concessions and cancellation of pending applications, saying that the law "destroys life."

To ease bishops' concerns, he said the group was calling for stakeholders in the industry to work together on the proposed guidebook, which would serve as basis regarding what is the best practice and what are the basic tenets of corporate social responsibility among mining firms. *With a report from Christine A. Gaylican*

Asian economies get lift from exports

SINGAPORE—ASIAN ECONOMIES are powering ahead on the back of an unexpected pick-up in demand from Europe, Japan and the United States, prompting economists to raise their 2006 growth forecasts, a Reuters quarterly poll shows.

Since the previous poll conducted in January, analysts have upgraded their economic growth outlook for major Asia Pacific economies, barring Indonesia, Thailand, Australia and New Zealand.

Japan was not part of the quarterly poll.

Reflecting the growth optimism, foreigners have bought a net $18 billion in shares in South Korea, India, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines this year, Nomura International data showed, driving some of those markets to record highs.

The Reuters poll showed China remains the region's economic powerhouse, with its economy, which analysts say is now the world's fourth-largest, expected to grow 9.5 percent this year.

While that pointed to a modest slowdown from a pace of 9.9 percent in 2005, the forecast is a few ticks above the 9.2 percent growth predicted in a Reuters poll in January.

The latest fillip to Asian economies came from Europe and Japan, providing an added impetus to demand for Asia's electronics, consumer goods and commodity exports.

Until last year most of that burden was shouldered by the United States.

In some countries, such as South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong, an upturn in consumption due to rising wages from a tight jobs market and revenues from tourism have boosted the services industries and provided another engine for the local economies. *Reuters*

Shoo is on the other put

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

FOR THE SEC, IT SEEMS THE SHOE IS ON the other foot.

Recently, a unit of the SEC called the "corporation finance department" threatened to penalize the GSIS, or mainly its boss, president and general manager Winston Garcia, the Cebu hometown boy who dared to fight the SM group of mall operator Henry Sy (whose BDO wants to take over EPCIB at the expense of the GSIS).

The SEC department "directed" the GSIS to disclose the buyer of its EPCIB holdings at the reported price of P95 per share or else …

Reason: The information may "materially affect" the publicly listed EPCIB.

Now, the supposedly secret SEC "directive" landed in various news reports. Obviously, somebody leaked it to media. It all had the makings of a shakedown.

In his response to the SEC, Garcia noted that the SEC was, in effect, compelling a stock market investor to disclose the identity of the buyer of its stocks—even before the transaction is done.

From now on, anybody who is interested in buying stocks—say, it crossed your mind—must disclose such an intent to the SEC or else …

* * *

IT SO happens that the "unnamed" buyer of Garcia was BDO itself of the SM group.

So there, the unnamed buyer of the GSIS alarmed the SEC so much that it even threatened to punish the GSIS, only for the SEC to find out that the buyer was the similarly listed company BDO.

BDO did not disclose its offer to buy out the GSIS at P95 per. It follows that the SEC should investigate BDO in the same way it is threatening GSIS, right?

Wrong! We all know the SEC department only wanted to harass Garcia. Maybe that should shoo him away from the SM group's takeover bid for EPCIB.

To think, the SEC commissioners did not know about the SEC shakedown against Garcia.

* * *

AND SO the SM group offered a fantastic price for the EPCIB holdings of GSIS. The same SM group did not offer the same price to the "other" pension fund SSS.

After all, SSS only has tens of millions of working class members who can just take to the streets to protest against this cute administration!

You see, in December 2003, or before the now-famous presidential elections in May 2004, the SSS agreed to sell its EPCIB holdings to the SM group for P43 a share.

Look at that—P95 for the GSIS and P43 for the SSS stake. This is outrageous.

Under the takeover (disguised as a merger) scheme of Henry Sy's daughter Tessie Sy-Coson, EPCIB would get a valuation of only P56 a share.

Yet the SSS, unlike the GSIS, did not even say a single word against the takeover proposal. The SSS even seemed to have fallen in love with it.

As a member of the SSS, I would have wanted the SSS management to raise hell over such an unfair treatment from the SM group. Maybe the SM group thinks that the SSS members are second-class citizens. For why does the SM group disdain the SSS so much, the SM group cannot care less how the SSS members will react to all that deception?

* * *

FRANKLY we, members of the SSS, cannot fault the SM group for trying to take advantage of us. That is business. Immoral, sure, but still business!

We must blame the SSS management for not lifting a finger while somebody tries to rape us. For why must the SSS even entertain that "rape" proposal from the SM group?

To me, the SSS should just join the GSIS in bidding out their EPCIB holdings, since together they can command a better price.

A couple of big banks, both domestic and foreign, already expressed interest in acquiring the holdings of the SSS and the GSIS.

Yet the SSS keeps on siding with the SM group that wants to put one over us. Why? I don't know if it's all the work of SSS president Corazon dela Paz.

It is nevertheless widely known in the SSS that Dela Paz travelled a lot abroad on SSS expense account, not to mention the SSS expense of P2 million to P4 million a month on an office in Makati for an "international organization."

And this is the person who did not even want Gloriaetta to remain as President. Dela Paz is a bigshot in the Makati Business Club, which called for the resignation of Gloriaetta last year. And so despite her opposition to Gloriaetta, Dela Paz remains the SSS boss, getting away with all the perks. In turn, she sells the SSS members down the river. Why is Malacañang blind to all those?

* * *

SEEN at the house of Henry Sy at the Tagaytay Woodlands, which is part of the Tagaytay Highlands, which in turn is owned by the taipan, was Gloriaetta herself.

That was during the December holidays in 2003, the year before the now-famous presidential elections of May 2004.

I am not kidding, that's how powerful Henry Sy has become. The President of the Republic went to see him in his vacation house.

As if by coincidence, around that time, in December 2003, our beloved SSS held a marathon meeting that lasted way past midnight, to decide to sell its shares in EPCIB at a bargain price. Well, to the same SM group!

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Survey shows SMEs expect to do well in '06

UPS poll also indicates rosy prospects for RP economy

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A SIGNIFICANT number of small and mid-sized enterprises are optimistic that the domestic economy would grow this year, even though the country is ranked among the lowest in the region along with Indonesia, according to a survey of SMEs in Asia.

Logistics service firm UPS, which funded the study dubbed UPS Asia Business Monitor, also said 48 out of a hundred Filipino SME leaders polled said that they expect their businesses to improve this year.

UPS Philippines managing director Pirojshaw Sarkari, yesterday said that three out of 10 local SMEs think their businesses would remain the same this year, while 7 percent believe things would take a turn for the worse.

The survey was conducted between November 2005 and January 2006, and covered 1,203 SME decision makers in 12 markets: Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand.

Respondents belonged to various sectors like automotive, electronics and electrical, garments and textiles, gifts and houseware, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, timepieces, jewelry and optical goods, and toys and sporting goods.

Majority of those polled register sales of between $500,000 and $10 million (about P25.5 million and P510 million) yearly, and the average SME had been in business for the past 22 years.

According to the survey, the top three concerns of SMEs are government regulations, rising cost of raw materials and oil prices, and cash flow and funding.

RP plans to tap ODAs to answer funding needs

Doris C. Dumlao

DUMAGUETE CITY—THE PHILIPPINES MAY tap cheaper official development assistance to answer part of the remaining $900 million in foreign funding needs for the rest of the year instead of raising everything from commercial offshore bond floats, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said.

Fresh from a series of country roadshows held in London and the United States, Teves said that investor sentiment on the Philippines is very upbeat, making it easier for the country to turn to the offshore debt market anytime.

"There are so many combinations we can work on," Teves told visiting business reporters Tuesday night. "We can even go domestic ... The remaining $900 million (in foreign funding requirement) is a figure we can work on."

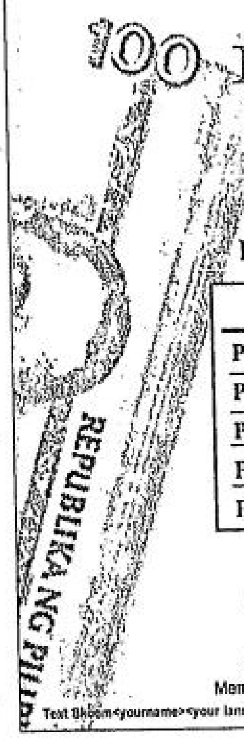
He added that the government need not resort to foreign commercial borrowings to raise the amount.

"ODA is cheaper," Teves explained.

Teves said any fresh foreign borrowing plan would be jointly evaluated by the Department of Finance, Bureau of Treasury and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"As long as there's an advantage for us, we'll be replacing the Brady bonds with new issues," Teves said. "We'll try to make it easier for us because Brady bonds are expensive."

The Philippines is set to buy back up to $411·million in Brady bonds this June, taking advantage of the strong peso. The country hopes to pursue the same external debt management tack followed by some Latin American countries that had bounced back from its fiscal woes like Brazil, Mexico and Colombia.



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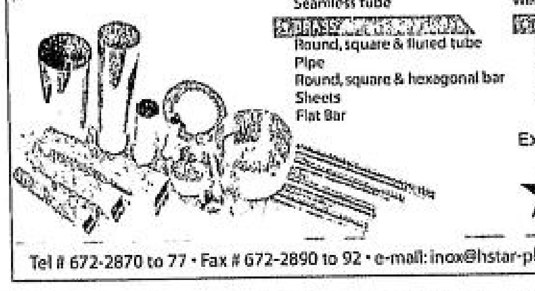

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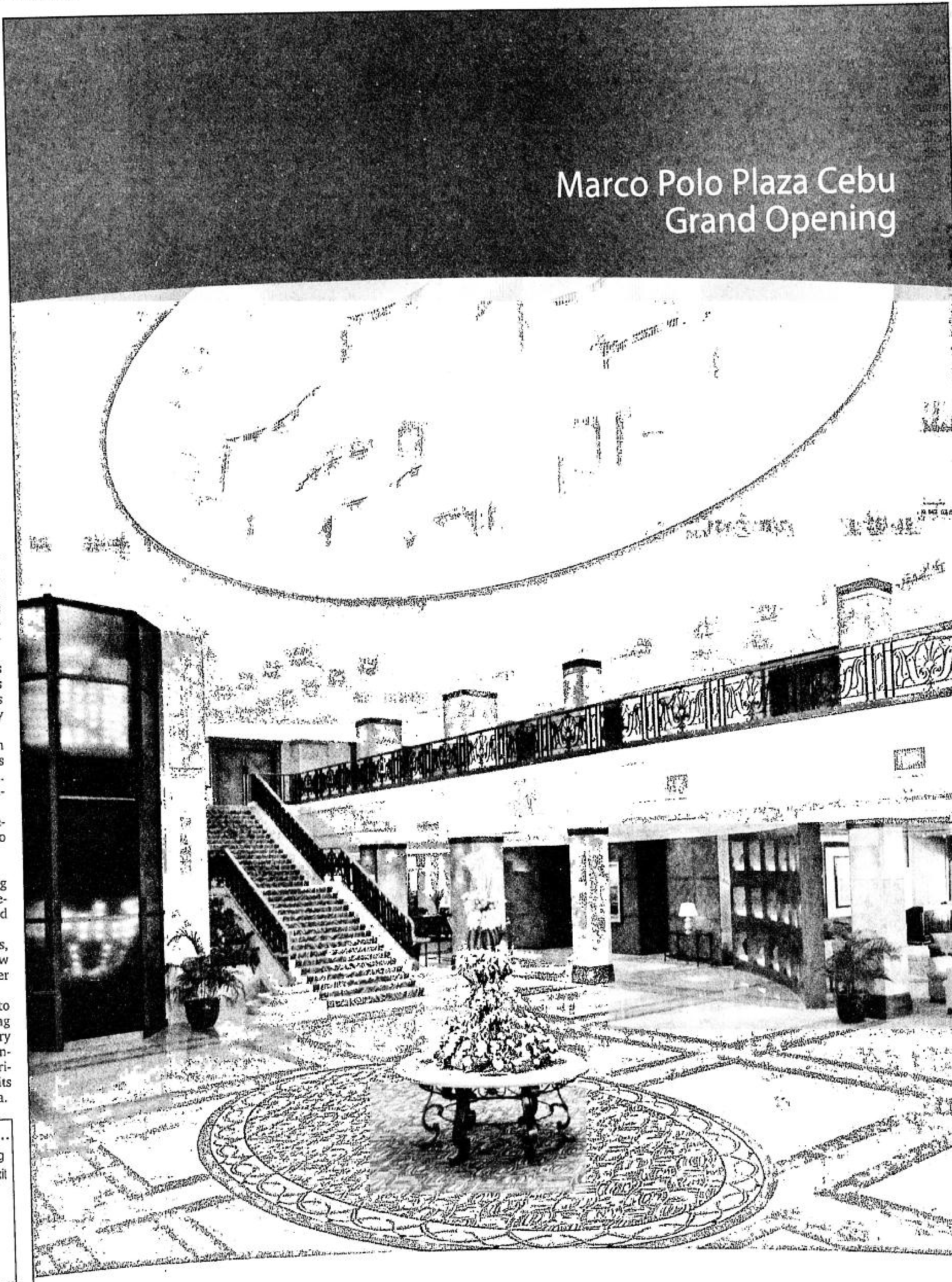

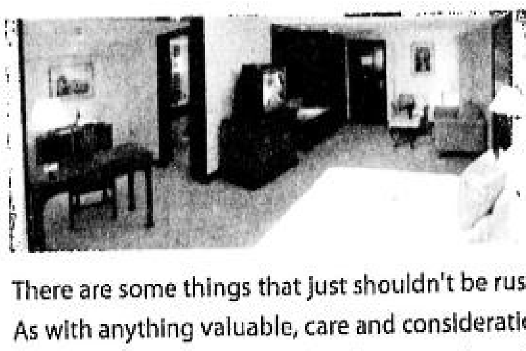

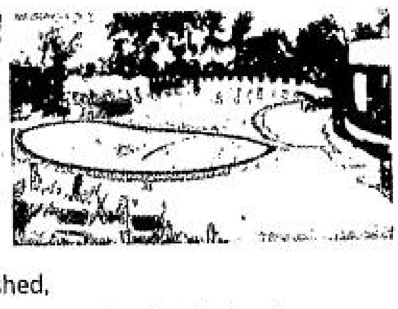

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VICTORIAS
MILLING COMPANY, INC.

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

VICTORIAS MILLING COMPANY, INC., Victorias City, Negros Occidental wishes to invite interested bidders/contractors to pre-qualify and to bid for the supply of labor, consumable materials, tools, equipment, supervision and technical expertise, test and inspection and complete commissioning of the proposed Condensate Recovery System, Boiler Blowdown Flash Tanks based on the following Scope of Work covered by JR No. 32228A dated March 23, 2006 under CAPEX No. MBO-10-20-06 C.

Interested bidders must submit the following pre-qualification requirements:

- Letter of intent with Interest to Bid
- VMC Accreditation papers for those who are not yet accredited
- Registered and in good standing with SEC or DTI
- Certificate of Registration with BIR
- Certificate of Membership with SSS, Philhealth, HDMF, Pag-ibig, etc.
- Certificate from Department of Labor and Employment
- Has a good track record and satisfactory performance as attested to by at least three (3) clients
- Latest audited Financial Statements stamped by BIR and certified by a Certified Public Accountant

Bidding kits are available at the MCD Office and at Makati Office on **April 27 to May 5, 2006**, after payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00. Kindly submit the needed requirements on or before **May 10, 2006** to qualify to bid. The pre-bidding conference will be held on **May 12, 2006**, at the VMC HRD Training Center at **2:30 P.M.** The commercial bidding will be announced thereafter.

For further inquiries, please contact **Messrs. Carlos S. Quiatchon or Dan C. Labrador** at VMC Millsite at telephone numbers **(034) 399-3696 to 97** and (local) **2351 or 2309**, and **Mr. Ernesto "Toto" Oligo** at VMC Makati Office at telephone numbers **(02)899-0485** and **(02)890-7061**. Also visit our website www.victoriasmilling.com and e-mail us at mcd@victoriasmilling.com.

Victorias Milling Company, Inc., reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the Company. The Company assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidder/s for any expense/s or loss that they may incur in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) TERESITA V. ILAGAN
Chairperson, Senior Bidding Committee

(PDI – April 27, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION TO CHARGE ROYALTY FEE FOR DIRECT CONNECTION

ERC CASE NO. 2005-261MC

CENTRAL NEGROS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CENECO),
Petitioner

-versus-

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO), DISTILLERIA DE BAGO, INC. (DBI), AND DYNASTY MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (GAISANO),
Respondents.

x--x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given of the filing by Central Negros Electric Cooperative, Inc (CENECO), on August 30, 2005 of an application for the charging of royalty fees for direct connection against Distilleria de Bago, Incorporated (DBI) and Dynasty Management Development Corporation (GAISANO) and for the issuance of a Cease and Desist Order to the National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO).

CENECO contends that it is a self-sufficient electric cooperative rendering reliable electricity to all its consumers including large power industries within its franchise area and that the act of TRANSCO of directly supplying power to DBI and GAISANO is a clear indication of lack of respect to CENECO's franchise. It asserts that to allow TRANSCO to continue extending direct connection to large industrial customers within its franchise area would ultimately affect its financial viability. CENECO argues that since it was deprived of the financial gains that would have been derived from DBI and GAISANO, it is entitled to royalty fees. It also seeks to recover damages arising from the direct connection.

The Commission has set the application for hearing on May 9, 2006 (Tuesday) at nine o' clock in the morning to five o' clock in the afternoon (9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.) at the Central Negros Electric Cooperative (CENECO) Office, Gonzaga-Mabini Sts., Bacolod City, Negros Occidental.

All interested parties who may wish to comment on or oppose the said application should file their comments and/or oppositions on or before the date of hearing. Such parties who may wish to have the details of the application and who shall have manifested to the Commission their desire and intention to participate actively in the proceedings, may request that before the date of hearing, they may be furnished with copies of the application by the applicant, which is hereby directed to furnish the parties making such request with copies of the application and its attachments. Likewise, any such party may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and the Honorable Commissioners **JESUS N. ALCORDO** and **ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN**, this 7th day of March, 2006 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) **MARIA TERESA A. RAMIREZ-CASTAÑEDA**
Executive Director III

(PDI--April 27 & May 3, 2006)

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS OF CAGAYAN DE ORO COLLEGE, INC.

Please be notified of the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of Cagayan De Oro College, Inc. to be held on **08 May 2006** at **3:00 p.m.** at **Cagayan De Oro College, Inc., Max Suniel Street, Carmen, Cagayan De Oro City** with the following Agenda:

1. Call to Order
2. Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of Appointment of External Auditor for Fiscal Years 2004-2005 and 2005-2006
4. Reading and Approval of Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2004-2005
5. Increase in Par Value of Shares
6. Increase in Authorized Capital Stock
7. Amendment of By-Laws
8. Increase in Number of Trustees
9. Election of Trustees
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

Stockholders of record as of 12 April 2006 are entitled to notice of, and to vote at, this meeting.

Copies of the Information Statement, apart from those given to the stockholders at their addresses on record, shall be provided upon request.

(PDI – April 27, 2006)

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(PDI - Apr. 27, 2006)

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OBITUARIES

THE CITY OF SAN FERNANDO
mourns the passing away of

His Excellency,

JUSTO ORTEGA ORROS, JR.

Ambassador to Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Belize

He was former Mayor of San Fernando, La Union from 1980-1988 and his motto was **ONWARD TOGETHER** which is now incorporated in the City of San Fernando Hymn.

We extend our sympathies to his bereaved wife, **Jocelyn Abrogat**; his children, Board Member **Jonathan Justo** and his wife **Raquel Singson**, **Dr. Justo Manuel Jr.**, **Joseph Joaquin** and his wife **Joyce Carol Calma**; his brothers and sisters, **Agustin**, **Joaquin**, **Rosario** and her husband **Ernesto Jalandoni**, **Remedios** and her husband **Antonio Sityar**, **Manuel** and his wife **Martha Moreno**; granddaughter, **Francine Singson Orros**, other relatives and friends.

His remains lie in state at the Diego Silang Hall, Provincial Capitol, City of San Fernando. Necrological Service of the City will be held on Friday, April 28, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. and the Province of La Union on Saturday, April 29, 2006 at 9:30 a.m.

His body will be brought to the St. William's Cathedral on the same day for the 3:00 p.m. Mass that will precede his interment at the San Fernando City's cemetery.

ORLANDO "Orly" B. VENUS

of Project 4, Quezon City and Bangued, Abra

Peacefully joined our Lord and his parents Milio & Moring on April 24, 2006 at the age of 55.

His bereaved wife **Noida**; child **Ralph**; brothers **Dante, Emilio, Nestor**; sister **Lorna**; uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, (Chapel 3 & 4), Marikina City.

Cremation will be on Sunday, April 30, 2006 at the Loyola Memorial Crematorium, Marikina after the 8:00AM Mass.

OBITUARIES

JOVITA GOMEZ CRUZ

Peacefully joined our Lord on April 20, 2006 at the age of 95

Her loving husband **Sergio Sr.** (†); children **Sergio Jr. & Lita, Lina & Oscar** (†), **Eddie** (†), **Corazon & Gerard**, and **Victor**; her grandchildren **Rodney, Marc, Kimberly, Rachelle, Peter & Rowena, Kari, Duday; Tiny & Stevie, Pokoy (Eric), Christopher, Florence, Nicole & Douglas**; her great grandchildren, relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Mt. Carmel Church, New Manila, Quezon City. Funeral Mass will be on Saturday, April 29, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. Cremation follows at Funeraria Paz.

Death Notices

RESTITUTO G. DAIT, SR.
of Tambuco, Goa, Camarines Sur

Died peacefully on April 25, 2006 at the age of 74.

His body lies in state at his residence in Tambuco, Goa, Camarines Sur. Interment will be announced later.

LAURA O. SOMO

Died peacefully on April 24, 2006 at the age of 80.

Her body lies at Somo Memorial Chapel, Rizal cor. Gomez St., Cagayan de Oro City.

The Directors, Management and Staff of
PACC Shipping Phils., Inc.
condole with the family of

Capt. Gaylord B. Malagad

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on April 24, 2006, at age 45.

He is survived by wife, **Philna**, and his three daughters, **Gail Kay, Gayleen** and **Gayphil**.

We request readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

> **"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."**
>
> — 2 Corinthians 5:8

Card of Thanks

We, the family of the late

SOLEDAD DE PERIO-CORPUS

of Subic, Zambales and Quezon City express our gratitude to those who shared with us their love, prayers and support in our time of mourning.

Orlando Dano Jumao-as

Employee of B. Braun Medical Supplies, Inc.

Died in the Grace of our Lord on April 22, 2006 at the age of 51.

He is survived by his mother **Cresencia Jumao-as**; wife **Arlyn Ledesma** and children **Mary Margaret, John Ace, Regine Dawn, Pamela Mae, June Marigold, Lyle Jeanne** and **Jan Orland**; sisters **Charo Jumao-as, Cielito Jumao-as-Dillon**; and brothers **Zosimo Jumao-as, Jr.** and **Oliver Jumao-as**.

His body now lies in state at Rolling Hills Funeral Homes, Cebu City.

Interment to be announced later.

Our Dearly Beloved

AMELIA ALVAREZ AQUITANIA

Peacefully joined our Lord on April 24, 2006 at the age of 79.

Her loving brothers and sisters-in-law **Roberto & Elisa, Fred & Susan**, and **Larry & Lorie Aquitania**, nieces and nephews, grandchildren, and all relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Chapel B, 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on April 29, 2006 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

Meralco sees sales growing 2.8%

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER REGISTERING A 4.2-PERCENT increase in electricity sales in the first quarter, power distribution giant Manila Electric Co. expects its sales to grow by 2.8 percent this year.

In a briefing yesterday, Meralco president and chief operating officer Jesus Francisco said the company's sales volume should grow at a higher rate of 2.8 percent this year, against the 0.6-percent growth registered from 2004-2005.

Meralco vice president and utility economics head Ivanna De la Pena had earlier said that this year's growth would mainly come from the commercial sector.

In the January-March period, Meralco saw power sales increase by 4.2 percent to 5,824 gigawatt-hours (GWh), driven mostly by increases in one-day power sales (ODPS) to the industrial sector and higher temperature and humidity.

As with the past quarters, the commercial sector led overall growth, with volume increasing by 6 percent in the first three months of the year.

Power demand from the transport subsegment rose 30.4 percent, fueled by the increasing ridership of the Light Rail Transit lines 1 and 2 and the Edsa Metro Rail Transit 3.

The full operation of five new SM malls caused demand from the retail trade subsegment to jump 25.1 percent.

The continued proliferation of call centers and other business process outsourcing (BPO)-related activities resulted in a 2.8-percent demand growth from the real estate sector.

Francisco attributed the increase in ODPS, a program that Meralco is implementing in cooperation with the National Power Corp., to the high cost of bunker.

In the first quarter, demand from the industrial sector grew 5.4 percent, fueled by the paper manufacturing, plastics manufacturing and electrical machinery sub-sectors.

DMCI sells Semirara shares to stock broker for ₱195M

Construction firm sells 6.3 million shares at ₱31 each

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

CONSTRUCTION GIANT DMCI HOLDings Inc. said yesterday it sold P195 million worth of its shares in coal mining unit Semirara Mining Corp. to stock broker CLSA Phils. Inc.

DMCI said the sale was in line with an earlier board resolution to sell 16.5 million Semirara shares.

DMCI said the transaction involving the sale of 6.3 million Semirara shares at P31 apiece was completed yesterday.

Semirara shares closed at P28 each yesterday, down 5 percent from the previous close of P29.50.

The coal mining company earlier said its net profit last year surged 11 percent to P1.6 billion, from the previous year's restated net profit P1.4 billion, buoyed by higher coal prices.

The amount translates to P5.469 in earnings a share, the company said in a statement to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

In 2005, average coal prices increased 12 percent to P2,205 a metric ton from P1,974 the previous year.

Revenues consequently grew 10 percent to P5.6 billion from P5.1 billion.

Production increased to a record high of 2.9 million metric tons of coal, up 16 percent over the previous year's 2.5 million metric tons.

This was attributed to additional production and support equipment deployed under its continuing expansion and modernization program.

Sales volume, however, dipped slightly by 34 thousand metric tons or 1 percent to 2.48 million metric tons in 2005 from 2.513 million metric tons in 2004, largely because of the prolonged maintenance shutdown at the National Power Corp.'s second coal fired power plant in Calaca, Batangas.

Deliveries to Calaca in 2005 dropped to 1.22 million metric tons from 2004 sales volume of 1.45 million metric tons, or lower by 16 percent.

ING remains bullish on RP

ING INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT PHILIPpines, a top retail fund manager, is still bullish on the stock market despite higher oil prices. ING chief investment officer Paul Joseph Garcia said following an ING briefing on emerging markets at Ayala Tower One in Makati yesterday that companies were poised to "weather the tough times" as they have tried to reduce debt and cut on expenses.

"Corporate earnings will be resilient. We have had a three-year winning streak in the stock market. We haven't seen that trend in almost a decade," Garcia said.

"Companies are more prepared for the tough times despite the pressure from crude oil prices, and given that they are leaner over the past few years. We are still overweight on equities," he added.

He also said he expected the stock market to generate a return of 15 percent for investors this year.

The benchmark Philippine Stock Exchange composite index yesterday climbed 14.59 points, or 0.7 percent , to 2,247.14, cheering the government's announcement that it will stick to its fiscal reforms.

A possible suspension of the value-added tax on petroleum products, which was earlier being studied would be the last option. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Surging crude ...

From page B1

the price difference," an agriculture official said.

A part of the Arroyo administration's fiscal and economic reforms, the VAT is aimed at generating more revenues to plug a gaping budget deficit.

The President's economic managers earlier assured the public that the VAT would have a "very minimal impact" on the prices of basic goods, oil and petroleum products as well as other services.

With the VAT implementation, Malacañang had ordered the Department of Trade and Industry to monitor the prices of commodities. The DTI, on the other hand, vowed that it would "not allow unscrupulous vendors from preying on the public."

SSS eyes ...

From page B1

P43.50. It would be crazy," SSS president Corazon dela Paz told the INQUIRER.

The Sy Group earlier said it was also willing to raise its offer price for the shares pending resolution of the Supreme Court case.

Dela Paz noted that the selling price would be hinged on the prevailing stock market conditions once the Supreme Court shall have decided on a case that earlier caused the suspension of a deal between SSS and Banco de Oro.

A group that consisted of politicians and pension plan holders questioned the transaction price and terms of the deal.

Ratings ...

From page B1

"Asia in general has a high credit rating, but Indonesia and the Philippines still have a lot of homework to do," Drijkoningen said in a press briefing yesterday.

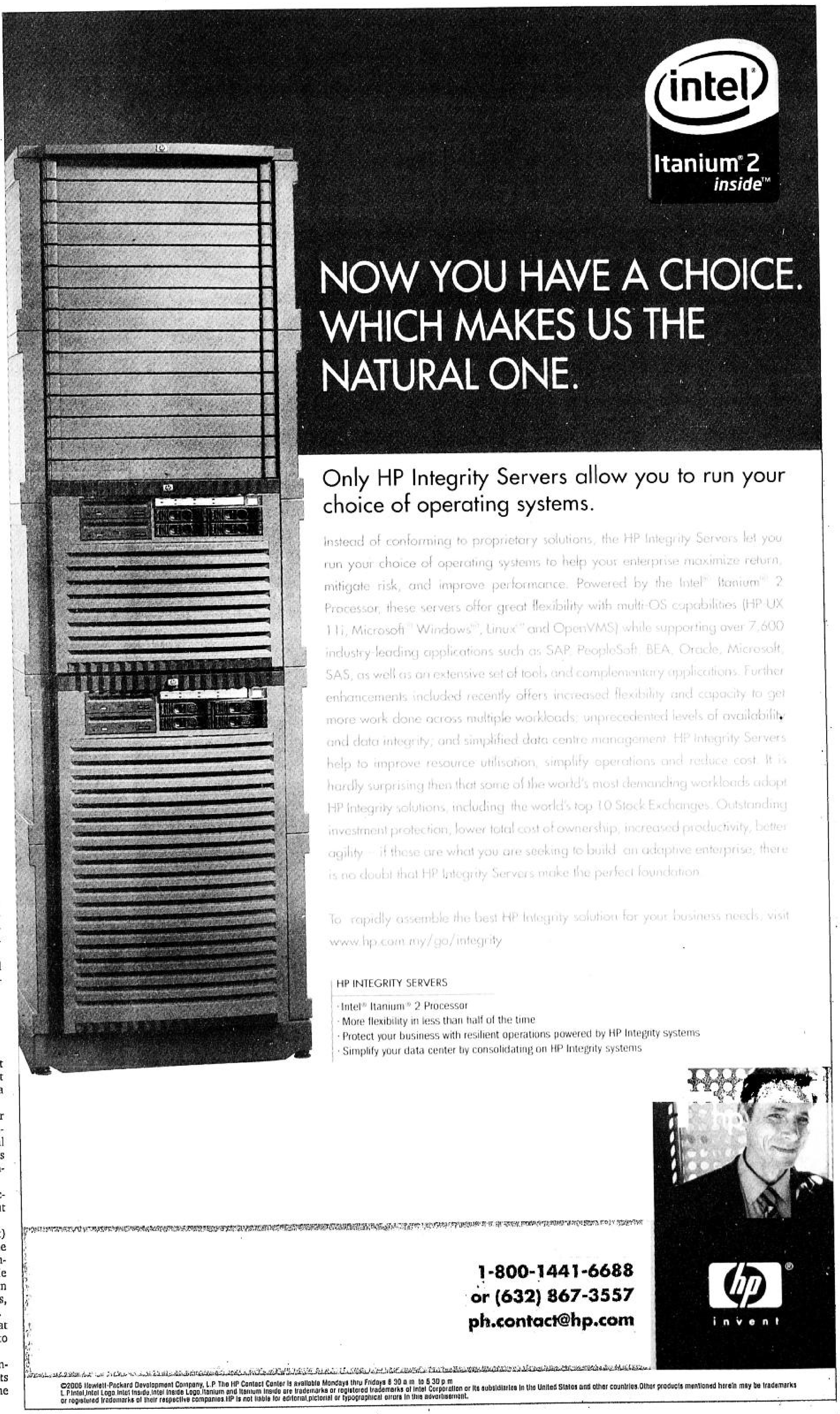
The Philippines' credit ratings with major international ratings firms are all below investment grade. But the government's fiscal authorities are hoping current fiscal reforms would convince rating agencies that the country's credit standing is improving.

Joel Kim, senior investment manager, acknowledged the government's efforts to put its fiscal house in order.

"The deficit is declining, but the (debt) stock is still not shrinking. It will take some years before the debt goes down to sustainable levels," Kim said in the same briefing. He explained that the debt would only go down once the government posts a budget surplus, thus removing the necessity to borrow more.

The government's budget deficit stood at P146.8 billion last year and is programmed to go down to P125 billion this year.

Kim expressed confidence that the government would be able to hit or even surpass its deficit-reduction target for the year given the improvements in its revenue collection.



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Shares close higher

From page B1

Volume was 2.17 billion shares worth P2.39 billion. Gainers outnumbered losers 61 to 31, and 55 stocks were flat.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the government was studying measures to ease the impact of rising oil prices on consumers, while keeping its fiscal consolidation program on track.

Press Secretary Ignaco Bunye said the proposed lifting of a 12-percent value-added tax on fuel would be considered, but will be the last priority.

"Though we recognize that this move would be one way to reduce the pressure on consumer spending, we believe it fails to take into consideration the long-term benefits to the economy," said Nadine Javellana of Macquarie Research Equities.

Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities said "the clarification from the Palace and the finance department provided investors some relief."

Most actively traded PLDT finished up P10 at P1,995. *AFP*

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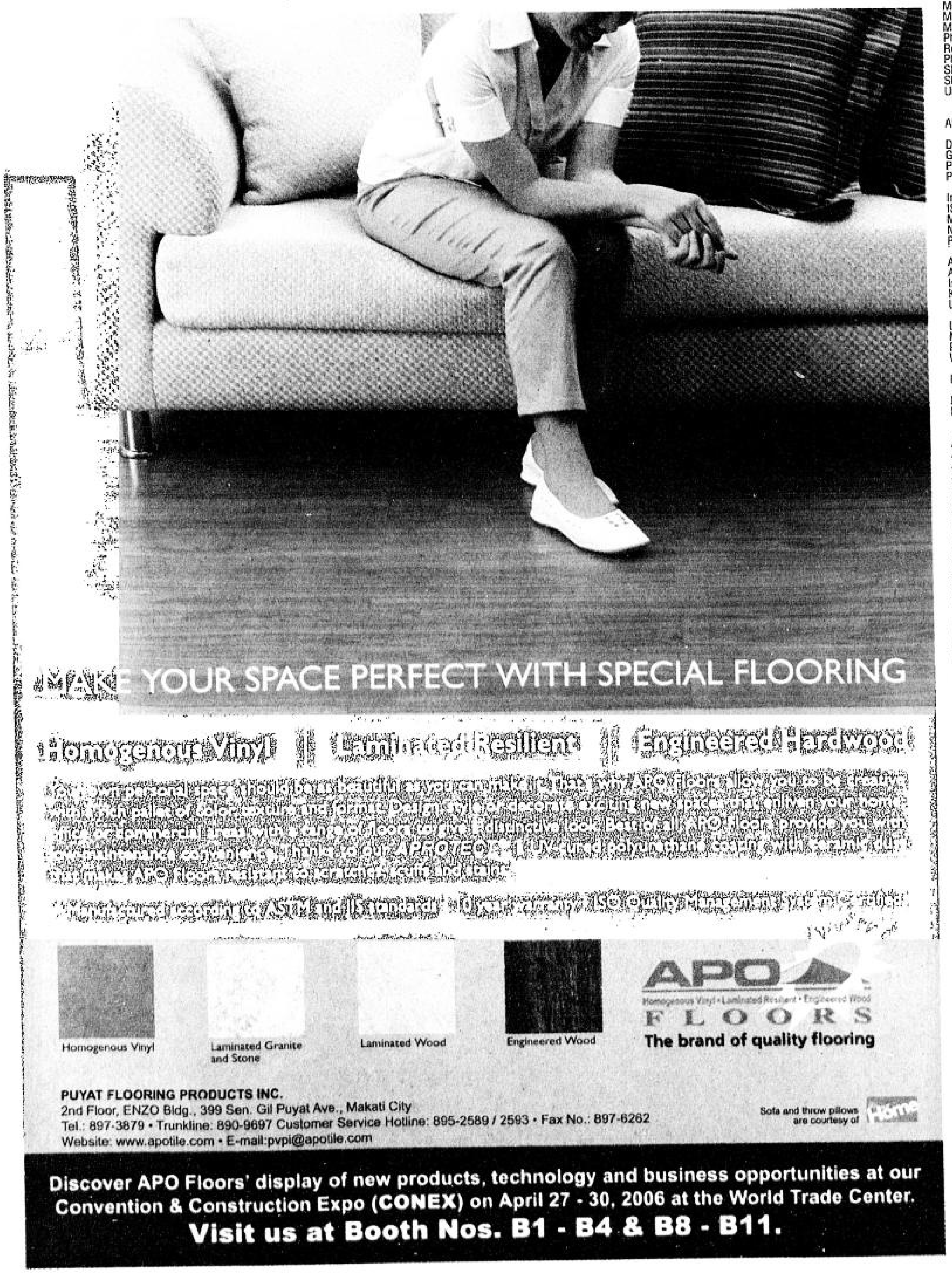

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 26, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.3	4.45	4.3	4.45	96,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35.5	35.5	35	35.5	5,209,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62	62	61	61	2,224,000
China Banking Corp.	795	795	785	785	3,740
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	19	19	19	19	1,000
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	500
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.39	0.4	33,680,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	70	71.5	68.5	71	243,300
International Exch. Bank	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	25,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38.5	39	38.5	39	514,100
Philippine National Bank	34	34.5	34	34	30,500
Phil. Savings Bank	39	40	39	40	2,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	100
Security Bank Corp.	46	46.5	46	46	123,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	38.5	38.5	38	38.5	27,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	10,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	48,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	29	29	29	29	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3330	3335	3320	3335	1,080
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2180	2210	2180	2205	2,820
Ivantage Corp.	1.08	1.1	1.06	1.06	2,842,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	44.5	44.5	44.5	44.5	172,300
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	43.5	44	43.5	43.5	458,200
Manila Electric Co. A	13	13	12.75	12.75	136,100
Manila Electric Co. B	19	19	18.75	18.75	672,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.5	3,559,000
Petron Corp.	4.25	4.3	4.2	4.25	3,676,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	1,100,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	11,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	5,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.04	2.3	2.04	2.2	122,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	21.25	21.5	21	21.5	75,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36	36	35.5	35.5	254,900
Pancake House Inc.	4.15	4.15	4.15	4.15	8,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.05	3.25	3.05	3.2	3,957,000
San Miguel Corp. A	60	60.5	60	60.5	54,400
San Miguel Corp. B	80.5	81	80.5	81	52,700
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3	3	3	3	10,000
Universal Robina Corp.	20.5	21.75	20.5	21.25	1,237,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	20,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.33	0.31	0.33	3,030,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.48	1.48	3,371,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	20,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.75	4.9	4.75	4.9	2,102,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	30,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.075	0.0725	0.075	1,600,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	2,000,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.45	0.5	0.45	0.5	70,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	60,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	2,000,000
Ayala Corp.	355	355	345	347.5	477,660
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	300,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.4	109,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	4,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.65	2.7	1,285,000
APC Group Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	590,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	118,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.92	0.97	0.9	0.95	2,790,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9	9	9	9	7,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.95	0.96	0.94	0.95	3,020,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.95	4.1	3.95	4.1	5,678,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.05	3.25	3.05	3.25	5,802,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.38	1.38	165,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.3	6.1	6.3	2,284,000
Medco Holdings	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	650,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	10,900,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.205	0.21	230,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.13	0.135	2,690,000
SM Investments Corp.	230	233	228	229	218,260
South China Resources Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	90,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.58	0.62	0.58	0.62	270,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	2,900,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	3,120,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11.75	12.25	11.75	12.25	8,833,300
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	20,000
Belle Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.18	1.2	5,723,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.32	1,940,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.94	2	1.92	2	473,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.62	1.62	28,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.2	0.205	0.2	0.205	1,100,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	14,010,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	2,600,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	350,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.38	1.4	1.36	1.38	4,999,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	3.05	3.4	3.05	3.1	400,000
Interport Res. B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	2,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	990,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.56	0.56	680,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.42	1.44	46,008,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.26	11,180,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	650,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.13	0.13	400,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	30,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	1,230,000
SM Development Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.64	1.64	112,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	8	7.8	8	6,400,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	1,000,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.5	12.75	12.5	12.75	165,900
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.04	1.08	1.02	1.08	18,990,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	865	880	865	875	64,060
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.85	2.9	2.8	2.9	2,929,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1990	2000	1990	1995	386,400
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	4,100,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.05	6,300,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.2	1.26	1.2	1.26	101,000
Nextstage Inc.	3	3	3	3	145,000
Philweb Corp.	0.027	0.027	0.025	0.026	123,200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.6	2.75	2.6	2.6	385,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	3,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	12.25	12.25	12	12	1,338,100
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	10,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.26	1.3	41,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.72	1.76	1.7	1.76	249,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	17,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	70,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.54	0.59	0.54	0.58	1,590,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	150,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.04	2.04	2	2.02	85,000
Paxys Inc.	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	122,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	2.7	2.85	2.6	2.85	7,016,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	2.7	2.85	2.6	2.85	6,465,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.008	178,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.4	7.7	7.3	7.6	2,799,000
Benguet Corp. A	12	13	12	12.5	225,600
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.88	1.9	1.88	1.9	51,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.35	0.38	0.35	0.38	40,150,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.37	0.41	0.37	0.4	16,450,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.025	0.023	0.025	601,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.028	84,100,000
Omico Corp.	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.0075	118,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4.05	4.15	4.05	4.05	7,954,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4.05	4.1	4	4.05	10,084,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	29	29.5	28	28	301,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.36	0.38	0.36	0.38	620,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.44	0.46	0.44	0.46	370,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated, Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.28	0.28	10,140,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	410,200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	100,200,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.87	0.92	0.87	0.92	1,350,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.86	0.93	0.86	0.93	300,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	7.8	8.2	7.5	8	2,613,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series F	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	12.75	13	12.75	13	742,500

CURRENCIES

April 26, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.804182	1.000000	51.8070
Japan	Yen	0.007003	0.008708	0.4511
United Kingdom	Pound	1.437957	1.788100	92.6361
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.103719	0.128974	6.6818
Switzerland	Franc	0.634263	0.788706	40.8605
Canada	Dollar	0.710848	0.883939	45.7942
Singapore	Dollar	0.506444	0.629763	32.6261
Australia	Dollar	0.599107	0.744990	38.5957
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.133278	2.652731	137.4300
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.214425	0.266638	13.8137
Brunei	Dollar	0.504854	0.627786	32.5237
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000092	0.000114	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.021365	0.026567	1.3764
UAE	Dirham	0.218956	0.272272	14.1056
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.243500	64.4220
Argentina	Peso	0.264533	0.328947	17.0418
Brazil	Real	0.379636	0.472077	24.4569
Denmark	Kroner	0.134057	0.166700	8.6362
India	Rupee	0.017903	0.022262	1.1533
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220838	0.274612	14.2268
Mexico	New Peso	0.072195	0.089775	4.6510
New Zealand	Dollar	0.502363	0.624688	32.3632
Norway	Kroner	0.127462	0.158499	8.2114
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013423	0.016692	0.8648
South Africa	Rand	0.132616	0.164908	8.5434
Korea	Won	0.000851	0.001058	0.0548
Sweden	Kroner	0.107361	0.133504	6.9164
Syria	Pound	0.015492	0.019264	0.9980
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025176	0.031306	1.6219
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000375	0.000466	0.0241

UNITED ARCHITECTS OF THE PHILLIPINES

32nd UAP National Convention & CONEX 2006

UNITED ARCHITECTS OF THE PHILIPPINES CONVENTION EXHIBITS

Theme: The Rise of the Archi-preneur

World Trade Center • Manila Hotel
April 27 • 28 • 29

Day 1
(April 27)

8:00 am - Thanksgiving mass	WTC Lobby
9:00 am - Opening of exhibit	CONEX 2006 WTC
10:00 am - Opening ceremonies	WTC Tent
12:00 nn - Lunch & canditates' forum	WTC Tent
1:30 pm - Seminar module 1	WTC Tent
2:00 pm - Convocation of fellows	Manila Hotel
6:00 pm - Honor dinner	Manila Hotel

Day 2
(April 28)

9:00 am - Seminars	WTC Tent
12:00 am - Lunch with Boysen paint	WTC Tent
1:30 pm - Seminars	WTC Tent
6:30 pm - Award & exhibition night	WTC Tent

Day 3
(April 29)

7:00 am - Sagip Manila Bay	Baywalk, Roxas Blvd.
9:00 am - Seminars	WTC Tent
11:00 am - General assembly and closing ceremonies	WTC Tent
5:00 am - Ecumenical mass	WTC Tent
6:00 am - Fellowship night "Party Around the World"	WTC Lobby

Be part of the coastal clean-up drive dubbed as

SAGIP MANILA BAY:
"Udyok ng Arkitektong Pilipino"

Sagip Manila Bay

April 29 • 7: 00am
Baywalk, Roxas Boulevard,
Manila

Messages...

CORDIAL GREETINGS to the United Architects of the Philippines on your 32nd UAP National Convention with the theme, "The Rise of the Archi-preneur."

The emergence of the "archipreneur," as your theme indicates, shows the evolving role of the architect as a multi-faceted professional capable of integrating architectural practices with sharp business acumen to launch profitable businesses. Indeed, architects need to adjust to the needs of the times and should reinvent themselves as entrepreneurs, so that they can help generate employment opportunities for our people and bolster our economy.

I am counting on you to be government's constant and reliable partner in propelling our nation towards greater peace and progress. May your every achievement in building infrastructure projects in our country serve us well in beating the odds.

Mabuhay!

HE GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President of the Republic of the Philippines

MY WARMEST GREETINGS to the United Architects of the Philippines on its 32nd UAP National Convention on April 27.

Technology has pushed the industry past the conventional frontier into a new era of innovative ideas. And this convention will be an opportunity to assess the future of the profession and determine courses of action in order for the Filipino architect to survive the stiff competition of a borderless economy.

Beyond this, architects play as important a role in the nation's economic progress as in its social development. They not just plan and design structures, they not just help build centers for business and commerce. They help provide hospitals for the sick, places of worship for the faithful, schools for educating minds of the young and old, and homes for the people, especially the poor.

"The Rise of the Archi-preneur" is the theme of the UAP convention this year. The greatest challenge before you is cultivating within yourselves a deep sense of civic commitment to rise above your individual concerns in the name of public welfare and national interest.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

HON. NOLI DE CASTRO
Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines

MY FELLOW VOLUNTEERS in UAP, it is with pride that I and the National Board of Directors welcome you to our 32nd National Convention and CONEX 2006.

Today's state of emerging business has been described as "The Age of Entrepreneurs." Small businesses are becoming competitive. The global economy has seen the emergence of new industries that have captured the attention of consumers, and made resourceful entrepreneurs capitalize on these markets.

With the theme, "The Rise of the Archi-preneur," this year's convention is a fitting avenue to empower Filipino architects and to discover the potential to be an Archi-preneur, an architect-entrepreneur, with strong belief in an enterprising opportunity, willing to accept a high level of personal, professional, or financial risk to pursue it. Where others see disaster Archi-preneurs see potential. When others think it can't be done, Archi-preneurs find half- a-dozen ways to get it done. When others see challenge, Archi-preneurs get, not shivers of fear down the spine but tingles of excitement!

In a global economy marked by rapid exchange of information and technology, an Archi-preneur is high on life, often hating the "wastefulness" of sleep! They are people who always think of business. Their passion shows in all they do and they rarely lack energy in following up on a new idea.

On behalf of the UAP National Administration, I convey my deepest gratitude to the men and women of the 32nd National Convention and CONEX 2006 organizing committee who toiled hard for the success of these events, our generous suppliers and friends in the industry, and all the architect delegates who gave time, talent, and treasure in making these momentous event possible.

Mabuhay ang mga Archi-preneurs!

ARCHT. EDRIC MARCO C. FLORENTINO, fuap
UAP National President

BEING WITH UAP, we bring together our efforts to make the organization stronger as we carry out our missions. Since our responsibilities are continuously challeged, we have honed our experiences to a higher level to increase the level of trust of our clients in our profession. Defining nobility through honesty, efficiency, and affordability of services, these we must present ourselves.

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As well, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and winners of earth-friendly beauty titles are expected to join the architects at Roxas Boulevard's Baywalk, where activities will start. "Sagip Manila Bay" will cover a two-kilometer stretch of Manila Bay's shoreline.

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UNITED ARCHITECTS OF THE PHILLIPINES

32nd UAP National Convention

&

CONEX 2006

UNITED ARCHITECTS OF THE PHILIPPINES CONVENTION EXHIBITS

Theme: The Rise of the

Archi-preneur

World Trade Center • Manila Hotel

April 27 • 28 • 29

Day 1
(April 27)

8:00 am - Thanksgiving mass	WTC Lobby
9:00 am - Opening of exhibit	CONEX 2006 WTC
10:00 am - Opening ceremonies	WTC Tent
12:00 nn - Lunch & canditates' forum	WTC Tent
1:30 pm - Seminar module 1	WTC Tent
2:00 pm - Convocation of fellows	Manila Hotel
6:00 pm - Honor dinner	Manila Hotel

Day 2
(April 28)

9:00 am - Seminars	WTC Tent
12:00 am - Lunch with Boysen paint	WTC Tent
1:30 pm - Seminars	WTC Tent
6:30 pm - Award & exhibition night	WTC Tent

Day 3
(April 29)

7:00 am - Sagip Manila Bay	Baywalk, Roxas Blvd.
9:00 am - Seminars	WTC Tent
11:00 am - General assembly and closing ceremonies	WTC Tent
5:00 am - Ecumenical mass	WTC Tent
6:00 am - Fellowship night "Party Around the World"	WTC Lobby

---

Be part of the coastal clean-up drive dubbed as

SAGIP MANILA BAY:
"Udyok ng Arkitektong Pilipino"

Sagip Manila Bay

April 29 • 7: 00am
Baywalk, Roxas Boulevard,
Manila

Messages...

CORDIAL GREETINGS to the United Architects of the Philippines on your 32nd UAP National Convention with the theme, "The Rise of the Archi-preneur."

The emergence of the "archipreneur," as your theme indicates, shows the evolving role of the architect as a multi-faceted professional capable of integrating architectural practices with sharp business acumen to launch profitable businesses. Indeed, architects need to adjust to the needs of the times and should reinvent themselves as entrepreneurs, so that they can help generate employment opportunities for our people and bolster our economy.

I am counting on you to be government's constant and reliable partner in propelling our nation towards greater peace and progress. May your every achievement in building infrastructure projects in our country serve us well in beating the odds.

Mabuhay!

HE GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President of the Republic of the Philippines

MY FELLOW VOLUNTEERS in UAP, it is with pride that I and the National Board of Directors welcome you to our 32nd National Convention and CONEX 2006.

Today's state of emerging business has been described as "The Age of Entrepreneurs." Small businesses are becoming competitive. The global economy has seen the emergence of new industries that have captured the attention of consumers, and made resourceful entrepreneurs capitalize on these markets.

With the theme, **"The Rise of the Archi-preneur,"** this year's convention is a fitting avenue to empower Filipino architects and to discover the potential to be an Archi-preneur, an architect-entrepreneur, with strong belief in an enterprising opportunity, willing to accept a high level of personal, professional, or financial risk to pursue it. Where others see disaster Archi-preneurs see potential. When others think it can't be done, Archi-preneurs find half- a-dozen ways to get it done. When others see challenge, Archi-preneurs got, not shivers of fear down the spine but tingles of excitement!

In a global economy marked by rapid exchange of information and technology, an Archi-preneur is high on life, often hating the "wastefulness" of sleep! They are people who always think of business. Their passion shows in all they do and they rarely lack energy in following up on a new idea.

On behalf of the UAP National Administration, I convey my deepest gratitude to the men and women of the 32nd National Convention and CONEX 2006 organizing committee who toiled hard for the success of these events, our generous suppliers and friends in the industry, and all the architect delegates who gave time, talent, and treasure in making these momentous event possible.

Mabuhay ang mga Archi-preneurs!

ARCHT. EDRIC MARCO C. FLORENTINO, fuap
UAP National President

MY WARMEST GREETINGS to the United Architects of the Philippines on its 32nd UAP National Convention on April 27.

Technology has pushed the industry past the conventional frontier into a new era of innovative ideas. And this convention will be an opportunity to assess the future of the profession and determine courses of action in order for the Filipino architect to survive the stiff competition of a borderless economy.

Beyond this, architects play as important a role in the nation's economic progress as in its social development. They not just plan and design structures, they not just help build centers for business and commerce. They help provide hospitals for the sick, places of worship for the faithful, schools for educating minds of the young and old, and homes for the people, especially the poor

"The Rise of the Archi-preneur" is the theme of the UAP convention this year. The greatest challenge before you is cultivating within yourselves a deep sense of civic commitment to rise above your individual concerns in the name of public welfare and national interest.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

HON. NOLI DE CASTRO
Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines

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BUSINESS

Japan sentiment on RP up

Rating still on the negative side, but improvement seen

By Ronnel W. Domingo

JAPANESE FIRMS' BUSINESS SENTIMENT on the Philippines has improved slightly to a negative rating of 8.8 in April from a negative 10.1 posted last month, according to a monthly survey by the Japan External Trade Organization.

Jetro data, which reflects overall confidence for Southeast Asia, show that Japanese companies and affiliates doing business in the country have given the Philippines a negative diffusion index in the past 12 consecutive months. In April 2005, the country's rating plunged from a positive 1.6.

Also, the report said business sentiment for the country over the next two or three months would further improve to a rating of negative 0.6.

Jetro said the overall sentiment for the original members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations—including Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore—was expected to improve to 0.5 from negative 3.5.

The poll showed that the region was benefitting from favorable domestic and overseas demand for electric and electronic machinery, as well as transportation machinery.

The aim of the survey is to provide up-to-date information on business conditions in Asia to help companies develop more effective strategies.

Jetro polls the companies, measuring year-on-year changes in their business outlooks for the current month, and over the next two or three months. The answers are expressed as DI, which is derived from the difference between the ratio of positive and negative responses.

Firms were asked to compare earnings prospects, supply and demand, inventory, sales prices and accounts receivable with the same period a year earlier.

When Jetro started the monthly poll in June 2001, the Philippines rated negative in the first 10 months, with the DI rating bottoming at negative 40.9 in December 2001 and peaking at 22.9 in September 2004.

Coconut oil still expected to fetch high rates

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE EXPORT PRICE FOR COCONUT OIL (CNO) in the world market will remain within the high range of $570 to $600 per ton for the rest of the year due to increasing demand for cheaper bio-fuels in Europe and the United States, as well as for specialty vegetable oils in Asia, an industry official said.

Also, the increasing capacities of oleochemical plants in Southeast Asia, including the country's Pilipinas Kao Corp. and Pan Century Inc., will ensure the high demand for CNO this year will be met, according to Danilo Coronacion of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) Group of Companies.

CIIF is one of the country's largest coconut oil exporters, and accounts for close to 40 percent of total Philippine exports that, in 2005, grew by 6 percent to 1.02 million metric tons.

Coronacion on Tuesday said that manufacturing companies in other countries have pushed up demand for oleochemicals, which has increased by 700,000 metric tons.

Oleochemicals, also known as specialty fats, are used to manufacture shortening and other personal care products such as soaps and detergents.

"This is aside from meeting the escalating demand for vegetable oils in China and India," he said. "This will keep prices at distinctively high levels."

Coronacion said that the high export rate will directly benefit small coconut farmers, as farm gate prices may increase from P16 to P17 per kilo of copra meal—the raw form of coconut oil.

UK bank sees double digit growth this year

By Michelle V. Remo

STANDARD CHARTERED BANK HAS PROjected that it would achieve a double-digit revenue growth this year of at least 10 percent on account of intensified marketing of consumer bank products.

Simon Yuen, the bank's senior vice president, said the growth projection applied both to gross revenues and net income. But he declined to give absolute figures, saying the bank could not disclose specific numbers.

Although the bank expects expansion in revenues, the double-digit growth seen this year would still reflect a deceleration from the previous year when it registered a 200-percent growth in revenues.

He said that with the high base of revenues last year, a growth of at least 10 percent this year would already be significant for the bank.

In terms of providing credit, however, Yuen said Standard Chartered would tighten its approval of loan applications to avoid risk of being trapped in high non-performing loans.

He noted that the banking industry in general is experiencing an expansion in borrowings while the number of borrowers was stable. This means liabilities on a per-individual basis is rising.

Yuen said the expected growth this year would be attributed to the rise in personal banking. One of the consumer banking products it introduced this year was the DreamSavers account.

The savings account was designed basically for long-term savings and opened by parents for their of children.

It is meant for children, Standard Chartered said, because the DreamSavers account features the bank's tie-up with Hong Kong Disneyland, being the offical bank of the latter.

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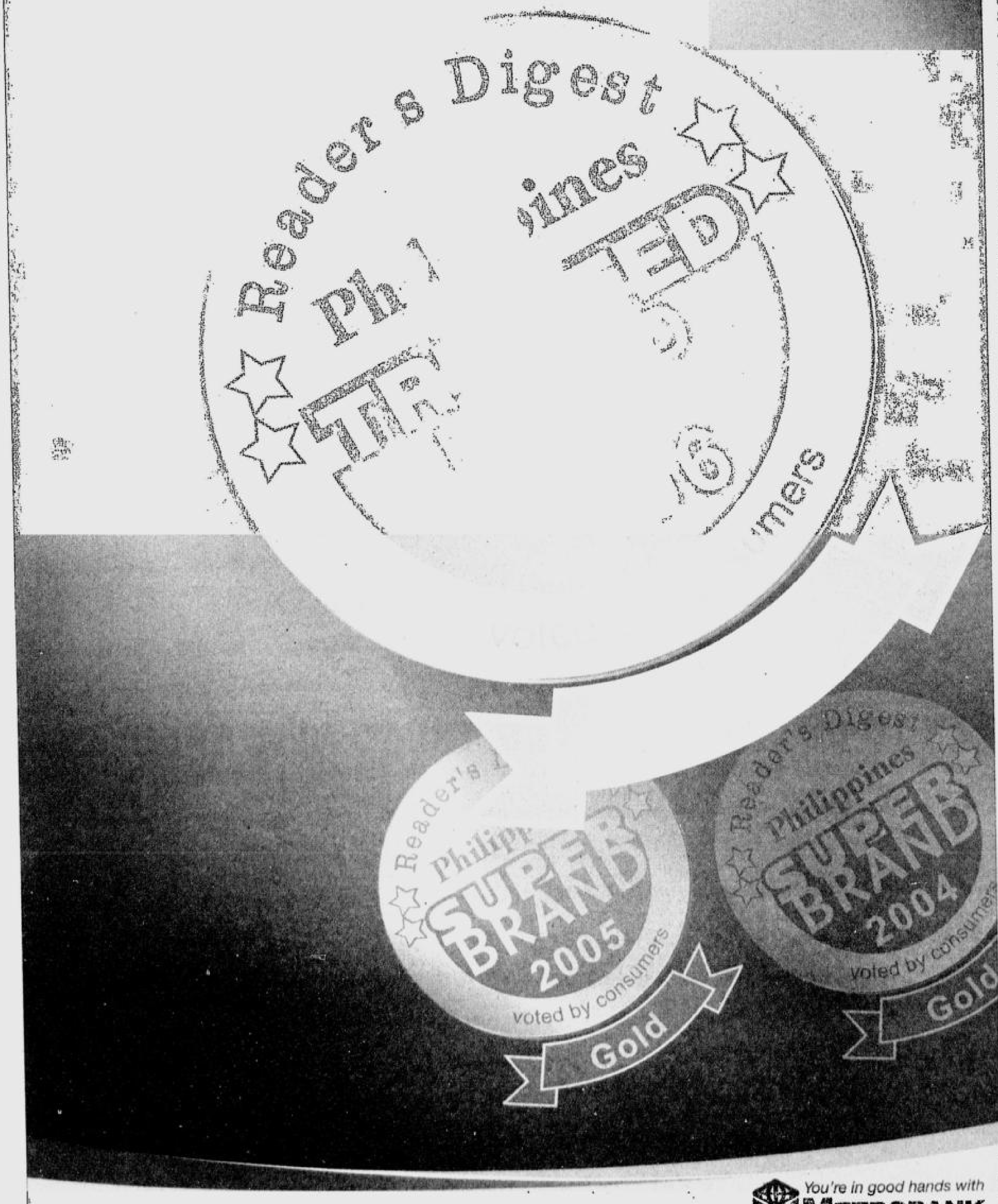

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A HARVEST of mangoes /C4

LIFESTYL
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
sms feedback: Inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at pr_lifestyle@inq

GOURMET Popcorn

Move over, Paul Newman

FEW SCENTS ARE AS GRATIFYING as freshly ground coffee, cinnamon rolls baking in the oven and newly popped corn!

Popcorn is one of the oldest recorded snack foods. Some claim that it might have been a Stone Age snack. Evidence points to popping as the first use for corn.

During biblical times, there were accounts of "corn" stored in the pyramids of Egypt but that was perhaps misunderstood because "corn" from the Bible was probably barley. The mistake was in the misuse of "corn," which was the general word for the most popular and widely used grain in a specific locale.

In the early 16th century, Aztec Indians used corn in ceremonies to honor the gods. There was even a popcorn dance where young women wore thick garlands of popcorn.

In America, corn became popular in the 1890s and until the Great Depression when it was one of the more affordable luxuries. Popcorn consumption tripled during World War II. Since sugar was sent overseas to the troops, there was not enough left in the US to make candy.

Popcorn's popularity went on a decline when television took over and people went to the movies less. But thanks to home packs of ready-to-pop corn and to the microwave craze, popcorn has made a comeback and is here to stay!

Gourmet popcorn

Americans of German descent started sugar corn. In the 1800s, they cooked large batches in cast iron kettles over wood fire. As a treat, they added sugar. Over time, honey and molasses were added while the corn was being popped. Thus, caramel popcorn as we know and love them so today!

In the Philippines, there's a young man named Tony Elepaño who has been romancing the stove since a young age.

The first business of this marketing graduate of Ateneo was toy importation. But somehow the kitchen continued to beckon, and when the kitchen does, there's no stopping it! For him, it was a typical case of "first love never dies!"

Tony said he never wanted to own a restaurant. To begin with, he had a good friend who once owned many and never seemed happy! Managing restaurants and the staff caused his friend major headaches.

But one should never say never, for Elepaño now owns Cajun Burgers and Ribs in Banawe. Yet, it was not enough. Somehow he wanted more and that's understandable. After all, he is young and the world is out there waiting to be conquered!

Tony searched relentlessly for a concept that would work. Until one fine day, he thought of doing fresh caramel corn. He sat down with suppliers, designed his machine, had it made and tried out his popcorn recipe. He was happy yet uncertain if the public would accept it. Like any diligent marketing grad, he first did a market test on his product.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

Like a bemused child, he recounted the experience to me. "My parents are into real estate. In our province, we own a memorial park and that's where I first sold my popcorn and it did so well. That inspired me!" And that was how Chef Tony's Gourmet Popcorn was born on Oct. 30, 2005.

From the original recipe, his popcorn repertoire has expanded. Now, he has pesto, cinnamon roll, light, parmesan and premium (a blend of corn and nuts) in three variants: white chocolate walnut, almond mochachino and caramel pecan.

My first experience with Chef Tony's Gourmet Popcorn (Original Recipe) was through my sister. Or was it through my student? I may have forgotten who first brought the tub of corn to me but I remember how good it was! One thing I will never forget though is

MOVE OVER/ C3

PINOY popcorn king Anthony Elepaño

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TURN 1 HP TO 116 HP.

Ebun at Greenbelt 3 has a new look, but the delicious down-home appeal of its food remains the same

EBUN'S classy makeover: a return to '70s swish

EVERYTHING fresh, from food to the flowers

The '70s show in this makeover

Text by Margaux Salcedo
Contributor
Photos by Romy Homillada

THE MAKEOVER OF EBÚN IS EVIdent once you step in through the glass doors of the restaurant. You get an instant feeling of swish, as the British say, and find yourself with a mindset of hip. The décor is '70s understated opulence, from the generous drapes to the lamps to the etched glass seats. You immediately find yourself in a good mood, an appealing ambiance to contrast against the summer heat. That Tuck and Patti is playing in the background adds to the room's tasteful appeal. Fresh flowers on the table get plus points for effort and style.

Home-cooked favorites

The menu, as well, has grown. Today, Ebún offers a wide array of home-cooked favorites, the list running the gamut from Chicharon Bulaklak to Paksiw Bangus Belly. One misses the former offerings of *balut*, but would be pleased to try other Kapampangan specialties that have made the new menu.

One of the partners, Ricco Ocampo, is quick to clarify that Ebún is not limited to the regional delicacies. They aim to deliver various Filipino favorites but even better because they have what he calls "a Kapampangan flair." A bold declaration like that is sometimes tough to back up, especially since Pampanga is known as the culinary center of the Philippines, a reputation well-earned and widely acknowledged. Pampangueños are known for their passion for food and boast of excellent cooks. So you look forward to an experience nothing short of amazing.

With no chef de cuisine and only home-trained cooks in the kitchen, Ebún inevitably has its fair share of hits and misses on this declaration. A hit, to be sure, is the Roast Pork Loin Humba (braised pork belly).

Ocampo explains that the meat is slowly boiled to tenderness before roasting and the succulence later accentuated with a sweet banana flavor for edge. For this dish, it is clear that the process has been handled with care, which displays itself winningly bite after bite.

A TASTE of cute: Ribboned steamed vegetables with *buro* and *bagoong*

HEALTHY alternative with Kapampangan flair: Lumpiang Cabalen

FAVORITE seafood appetizer: Gatang Kuhol

ROAST Pork Loin Humba: Slowly boiled to tender perfection then accentuated with a sweet banana flavor for edge

Seafood bites

For seafood lovers, a recommendable seafood plate is the grilled tuna. Unlike the grilled tuna that may be had almost anywhere nowadays, Ebún's is more juicy and flavorful. Ocampo says their secret is in the way it is marinated.

For strict vegetarians, like Ocampo himself, the Puso ng Saguin Kilawin (banana bud/heart cooked in vinegar) is a good choice. It is light and slightly sour as respectable *kilawin* should be. Another vegetable recommendable is the Steamed Vegetables with Burong Angeles at Bagoong. *Buro* is fermented rice with fish or small shrimps, also known as *balo-balo*. It is a favorite Kapampangan delicacy usually served to suffix fried or grilled fish or, as in this case, boiled vegetables.

For other delicacies, however, the spunky Pampangueño bite is dearly missed even if it appears that rigid cooking processes have been followed to the letter. For instance, it is exciting to order the Kare Kare Buntot ng Baka (stewed oxtail) because, unlike most restaurants that use beef or tripe, there is a venture to serve oxtail, a very delectable part. Even better, in making the stew, the cooks supposedly use peanuts that are specially ground for the *kare-kare* and not just your ordinary peanut butter. Yet bewilderingly, the distinct peanut flavor that breathes life into good Pampangueño *kare-kare* is amiss.

The presentation of the food, however, is impressive. There's a dose of cute while eating as you notice that the vegetables are not just laid out by the cook to mesh with the rest of the ingredients on the plate or in the bowl. They are either folded or ribboned, like a neat little girl's long hair. I wondered about this because, for Filipino cooking, ingredients are usually allowed to swirl among each other to combine tastes and textures.

Ocampo explains that in his ancestral home in Pampanga, the veggies are always separated so the flavors of the individual ingredients can stand out or stand on their own. A different take on cooking, but it is at least visually appealing.

Hit desserts

Dessert is my favorite part because with delicacies brought in especially from Pampanga, flavor and taste hit the bull's eye. Don't go home without trying Sussie's Tibuk Tibok, which we call *majablanca* here in Manila. It is clearly created by Pampanga's townsfolk the old-fashioned way, therefore you can expect that it is made of pure carabao's milk and with the smooth and silky consistency that can only be perfected through the decades.

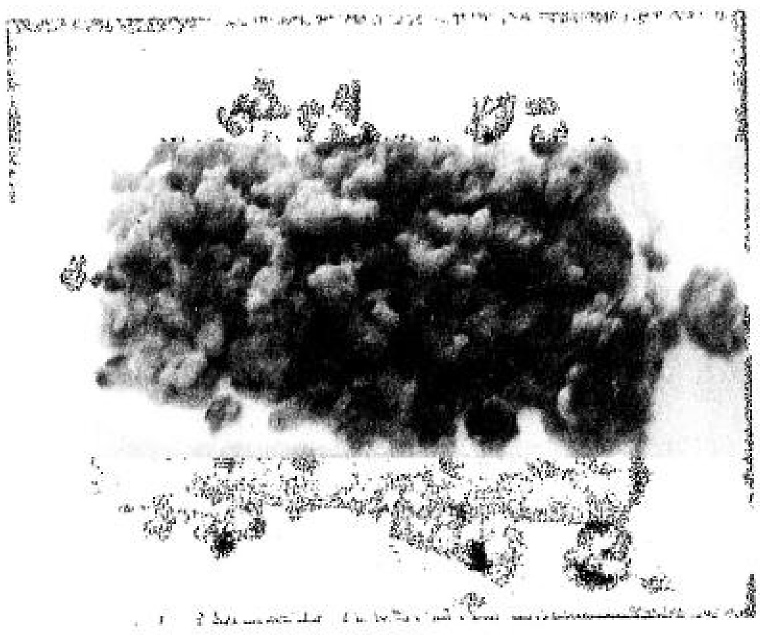
Also, now that it's summer, it is extremely refreshing to relax under the Ebún tents with their shakes and coolers. My personal favorite is the Camias Shake, which transports you to the beachside with every sip. You may also try another house specialty, the *halo-halo*, which uses ice shaved by a specifically imported machine to a very fine texture that it instantly melts in your mouth.

For dishes that range from P80-P280, Ebún is not a bad place for a quick, practically home-cooked meal.

Now Ebún's sense of taste may not be as sharp as your grandmother's, but it is a very reasonable and close cry to your favorite provincial meal in the convenience of a posh Makati mall. Some dishes may lack the passion and love that was poured into your favorite dish by your Indang Belen or Nana Tsayong, but you definitely have a choice that beats city fast-food.

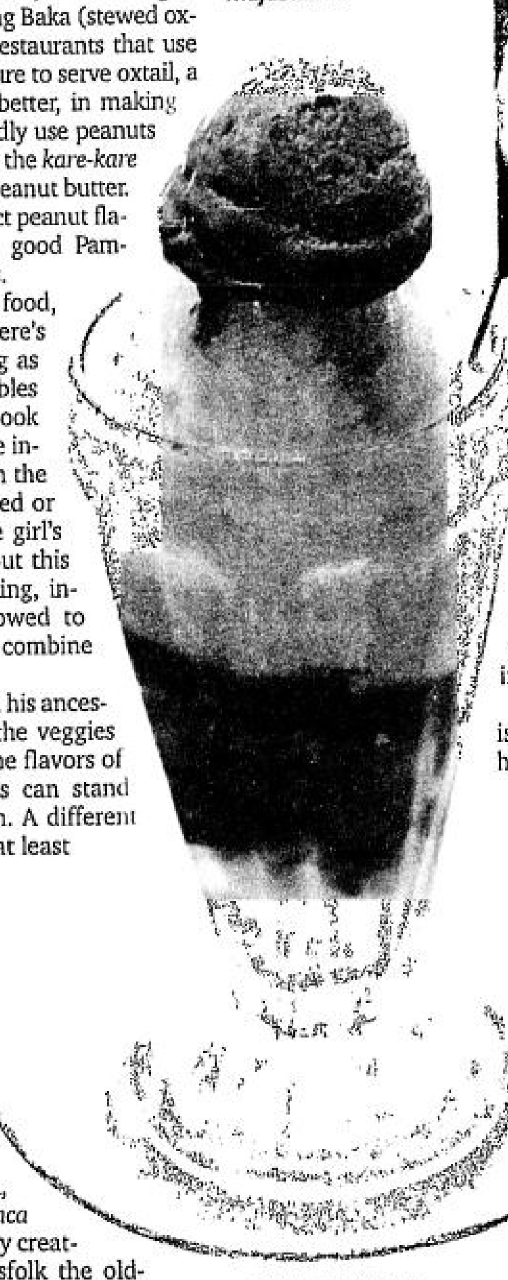
Ebún is on the ground floor of Greenbelt 3. Open 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Monday-Thursday; 10 a.m.-2 a.m., Friday-Sunday.

E-mail the author at margauxsalcedo@yahoo.com



SUSSIE'S Tibuk Tibok: Smooth and silky traditional *majablanca*

MUST-TRY delicacy: Bibingka Special



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Waiting to be told

By Linda B. Bolido

THE CONSUMER

READER GLORIA Nuguid, who complained about poor after-sale service, raised a valid point when she wrote to the manager of the company that needed prodding from the Department of Trade and Industry before it acted on her problem.

"It is unfortunate that I have to get the attention of… the Department of Trade to handle my problem… I sincerely hope that in the future, you will treat your clients with courtesy and provide them the necessary after-sales service. It is a known fact that the only way to keep any business growing is good service…"

I just had this same problem myself with my cable television provider. I was calling almost every week to complain of poor reception and I wanted a technician to look into the problem. They only acted with dispatch after I managed to have my e-mail forwarded to the owner.

Why do we wait to be told to do what we already know is our job? I am sure the staff would have preferred to leave the owner out of my problem but by ignoring my complaints, they invited precisely the situation they wanted to avoid.

The best thing to do, if you are an employee who want to keep your job, is to give the customer no reason to bring his/her complaint to management or DTI. Either way, I don't think bosses will want that to happen.

Never assume that the customer could not do anything but wait for you to find the time for his/her complaint. These days many customers no longer choose to suffer in silence. They explore every available avenue to air their grievances.

Customer unwanted

But at least my new cable company is always ready to offer assurances that they are doing something about my problem in their control center. My old cable service provider was worse. I reported on a Tuesday that I completely lost cable reception and they told me their technician would only be available on Saturday, four days later.

Yet, when I asked when they could end my subscription, they said they could effect the disconnection the next day.

If that doesn't tell you your custom is unwanted, I don't know what will.

Sometimes even going to the top is of little help. A colleague found that the due date for her water bill fell on Good Friday. She called the company's press officer to inform him she would make the payment on the first working day after the holidays.

Despite his assurances that it was all right, early on the second working day after the holidays, men showed up in her home wanting to turn off their water connection.

Wasteful

The Manila Electric Company does not immediately send people to cut off power service if your payment does not get credited on its due date. But I wish they would not be so quick to send out disconnection notices.

If you pay your bill on or a day before the due date, you probably have received a disconnection notice dated the day after your payment was due. Since many people no longer go to Meralco offices to pay their bills and banks do not post payments on the same day they are received, shouldn't Meralco wait a few days before sending out those disconnection notices?

Think of the paper, time and effort wasted sending out reminders to people who had already paid their bills. With so much resources being wasted, every little effort to cut down on unnecessary consumption should be made.

*(Our regular columnist, Marietta V. Giron, is indisposed. Please send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., Makati City; PO Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph —**Editor**)*

Lessons under mango trees

From page C4

through. As a result, the trees aren't as big as those that line country roads.

2. Just before harvest is a crucial time. Fruits that have fallen prematurely and flowers that are late bloomers have to be removed as they attract insects.

3. Mangoes are ready for harvest after 120 days. Fruits aren't ripened on the tree because these will be less sweet. Fruits will ripen give or take five days.

4. Harvest involves three people for every tree—one to use the ladder or picking tool (*sungkit*) to bring a branch down, but not the fruit; one to cut the fruit from the tree; one to get the fruit and lay it down in the box very gently.

5. Rico says wrapping fruits (as we saw on trees leased by a multinational company for export to Japan) will keep the skin smooth but the fruits will be less sweet because mangoes like heat.

6. Heat and high humidity make for sweet mangoes. And Zambales is hot and humid.

Sweetest

The first information Rico gave me was that, in the "Guinness Book of World Records," mangoes from San Salvador Island in Masinloc, Zambales were declared the sweetest in 1995. That's only 20 kilometers away from his farm, says Rico, hoping, you see, that because of the proximity, the farm shares the reputation.

While Rico's mango information was interesting, totally fascinating is his mother, Filo, whose talent is in sorting the fruit. Her children say she can tell just by holding a fruit if it's good or not.

Filo says a powdery exterior is a sure sign of an excellent fruit. The sorting also includes grouping according to size. So there's jumbo (about ½ kilo per piece), extra, large, medium and regular.

RICO, Maricris and Filo Batungbacal

But there are mangoes that won't grow large. You'll be surprised that these are not thrown or given away. They are bought and even preferred by some customers. Called *bioco*, those in the know rub the fruit with two hands, insert a straw and drink the instant sweet mango juice. Another priceless freak.

Cash crops

Rico has learned not to put all his mangoes in one *kaing*, so to speak. He grows cash crops just in case something happens to his mango harvest. Every 65 days, he has honeydew and watermelon with yellow meat.

At the lunch, a guest whose business is supplying seeds for cash crops, enlightened us on what people listen for when they tap on watermelons. To demonstrate, he slapped his forehead, then his chest near the heart and, lastly, his stomach.

He says the sound heard in those parts of the body should be our guide. The forehead sound says the fruit isn't ripe yet. The chest sound indicates a good fruit. The stomach sound, an empty one, he says, will tell you the fruit is past its prime.

I still have to try that technique.

We were full not only because of the lessons but also from the great lunch of the fattest steamed crabs and grilled prawns, very tender pork *sinigang*, fresh steamed mussels and Filo's specialty—*lutong toyo* that looks like *adobo* but is pork cooked with just *toyo*.

Of course, we had the fruits of the farm. Rico apologized that they didn't have enough mangoes yet and what we had were the rejects. But there was nothing to be sorry for because those were extra sweet.

Near our lunch table were boxes containing fruits they wanted us to bring home. Rico had the boxes made because they hold the fruit better than the traditional *kaing*. And because mangoes contain so much heat, there are holes on the sides to keep them cool and to slow the ripening while the fruits are in transit from the farm to the market. The box has to look special because Rico thinks branding mangoes as Batungbacal and the other crops as Betagro (Beta Agricultural) requires just such packaging.

Call Mayet Batungbacal at 7166178 or 7147935. E-mail mail.us@beta-agricultural.com

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04 @yahoo.com

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P2,750 - MAY 3 - Bake & decorate your own character birthday cake using star tips, simple borders & icing flowers.
P4,500 - MAY 4 - 5 - Wedding cake assembly: Bake & decorate your own 2 tiered wedding cake using fancy borders, scrolls, strings & icing flowers
NEXT SCHED: JUN 5 - 9
2. MAY 6, 13 & 20 // 8:00AM - 12:00NN - SUGAR FREE BAKING FOR DIABETIC
P3,000 - MAY 6 - Flaky (kaliskis) Empanada, Coffee Cheese Cake, Chocolate Nut Pie, Pineapple Flower Cake, Lemonpie.
NEXT SCHED: JUN 10
P3,000 - MAY 13 - Banana, Apple Almond, Bars, Carrot Cake, Choco Nut Cake, Whole Wheat Bread, Raisin Bread.
NEXT SCHED: JUN 17
P3,000 - MAY 20 - Brownie Supreme, Choco Chiffon, Orange Chiffon, Banana Pecan, Cookies, Spiced Raisin Cookies, Chewy Golden Cookies Baking for Diabetics.
NEXT SCHED: JUN 24
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NEXT SCHED: JUN 12 - 15
4. MAY 10 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - NEW METHOD ON FONDANT - (P5,000)
Using Lace Mats, New Rolling Pin W/ Designs, Swags & Ribbons, Non-Stick boards w/ Flowers & Veiners & Quilting NEXT SCHED: JUN 14
5. MAY 15 - 19 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - BASIC COMMERCIAL BAKING - (P13,000. For whole course)
P2,600 - MAY 15 - Cakes, plain, mocha, choco, orange chiffon cakes, pound cake, sponge cake, moist choco cake.
P2,600 - MAY 16 - Cakes & Roll: malacañang roll, chocolate roll, brownies, pineapple upside-down, custard cake, mamon.
P2,850 - MAY 17 - Breads: pan de sal, dinner rolls, buns, pan de coco, ensaymada, honey bread & raisin bread.
P2,850 - MAY 18 - Pies: Buko pie, custard pie, pineapple pie, apple pie, mango pie, caramel tart.
P2,600 - MAY 19 - Pastries & Cookies: almond tart, San Nicolas cookies, camachile, oatmeal cookies, lengua de gato, coconut macaroons.
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Move over, Paul . . .

From page C1

the sense of pride I felt upon finding out that this famous popcorn was not an imported repack, and that Chef Tony is a true blue Filipino!

Chef Tony's Gourmet Popcorn is available at Price Smart, Cost U less, and stalls at the Podium, Metro Walk and Banawe. For bulk or special orders, premium flavors and franchising, call 0917-500-CORN.

I love popcorn but always burn it. Can't get it right. Please help!

SUZETTE

Suzette, the Popcorn King answers your questions:

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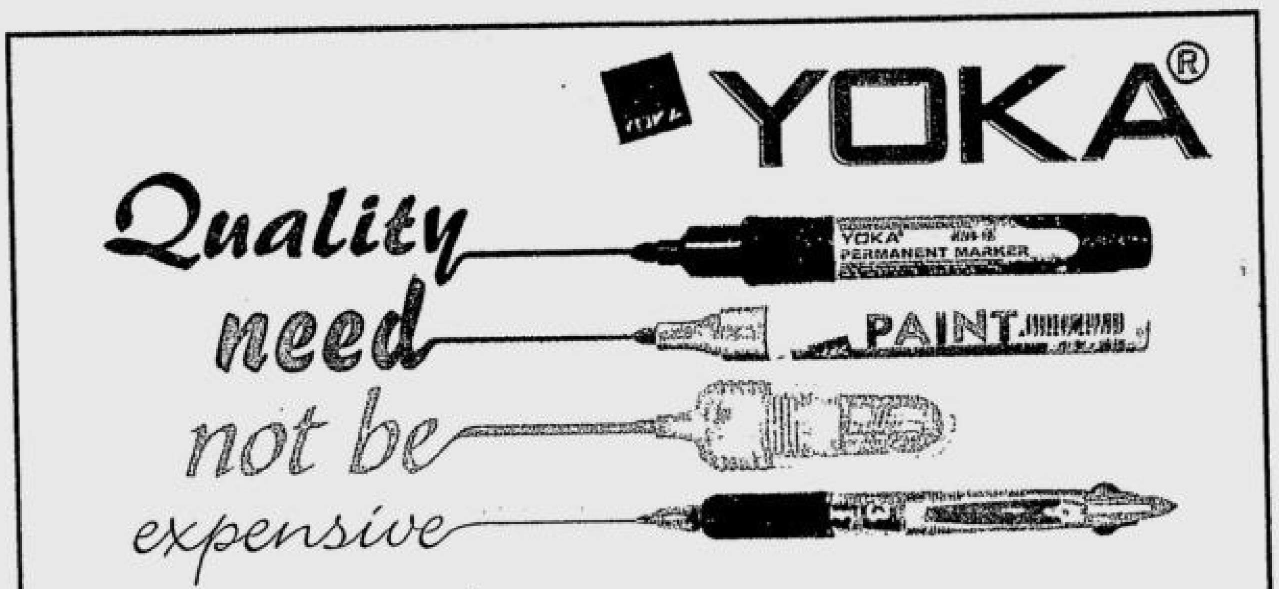
Easy popcorn recipe?

Right after popping an Act 2 popcorn pack (or four cups of popcorn), add 2 tbsp sugar and the Act 2 butter pack or 1-2 tbsp melted dairy creme. Shake.

On May 16, I am starting a hands-on cooking class series for teens, newlyweds and beginners! Call 9289296 or 6335162.

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph



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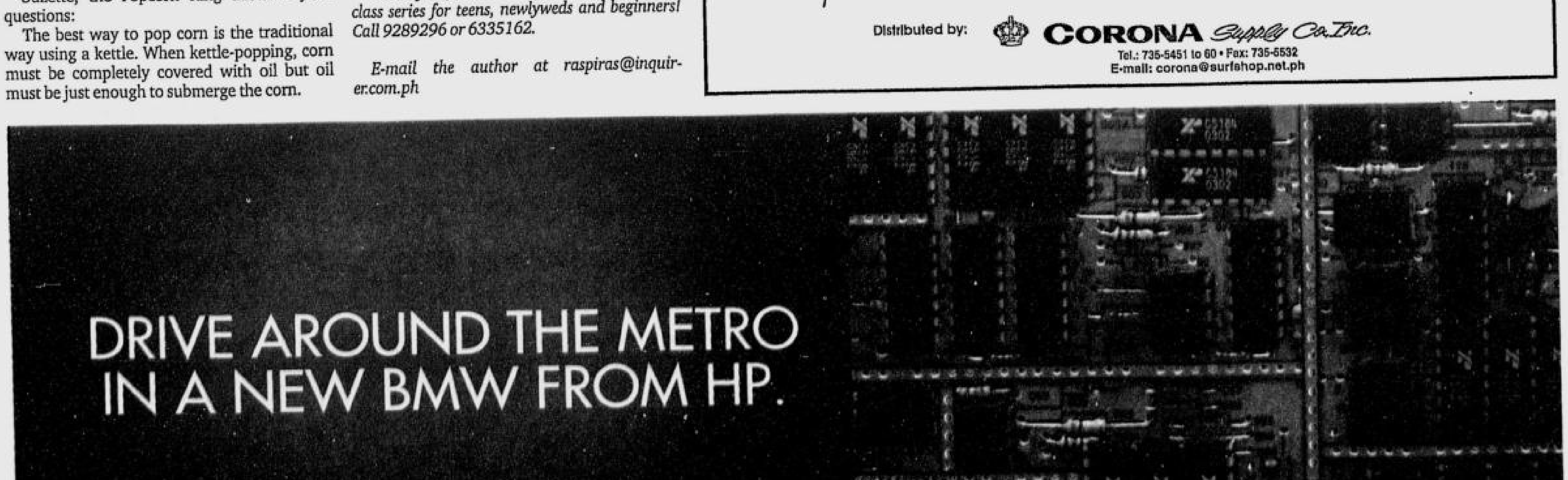
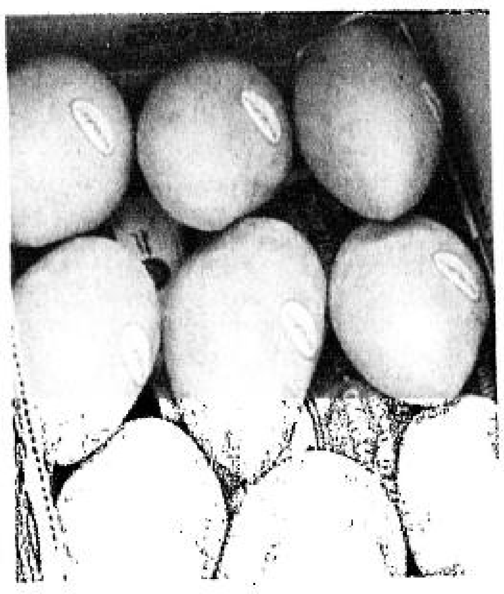
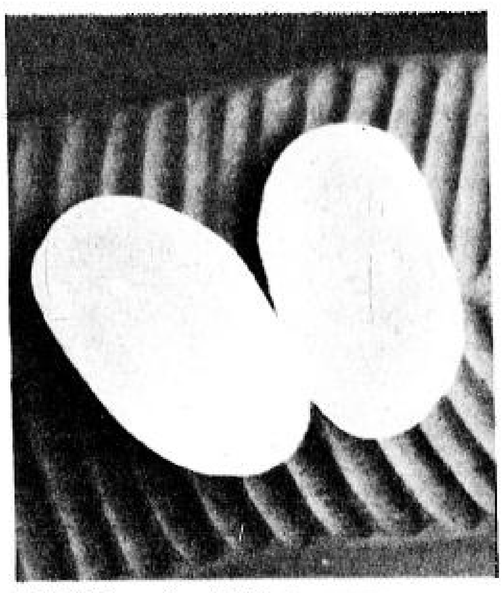


Lessons under mango trees

Wrapping will keep the skin smooth but the fruits will be less sweet because mangoes like heat



MANGOES ripen in the box.



READY for eating is this ripe mango.

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

THE LATE DOREEN GAMBOA Fernandez wrote about Batungbacal mangoes almost every summer. She timed it when the fruits were being harvested and even printed phone numbers for people to call.

I never got around to placing my order because mangoes are always available everywhere. But the name stuck so when I was introduced to a Batungbacal, it was mangoes, not Annie, the disco queen of a song, that came to mind.

Maricar B. Encarnacion hosted a group of us in Cebu. When she invited me to witness harvest time at their mango farm in Zambales, I couldn't pass up the opportunity.

But harvest was delayed. The rains came unexpectedly and the temperature dropped, very unusual for the time of year.

Though we were grateful for the comfortable weather during our visit, it wasn't good for the mangoes. Harvest was less this year. From the ideal three months of yield, it's down to one month. That means the average 250 tons of mangoes is down to 180 tons.

Of the five siblings, it's Rico Batungbacal who runs the farm started by the parents, Moy and Filo, in the '70s. Rico took over in 1988 and his mother said she pitied him when the rest of the family would go home after a visit.

Leaning from others

Rico didn't study agriculture but he says his management economics degree from the Ateneo taught him to devise systems so that trees grow correctly. He learned the science of growing mangoes and maintaining the trees through experience, consulting experts and visiting other farms. He has been to the Mango Institute, a research center on Guimaras Island.

The farm has 7,000 trees. As we went through the rough road, through rows of trees, Rico gave us lessons in mango agriculture.

1. Pruning is necessary and the right time for it is right after harvest. The middle of the tree is cut so the sun's heat goes

LESSSONS/ C3

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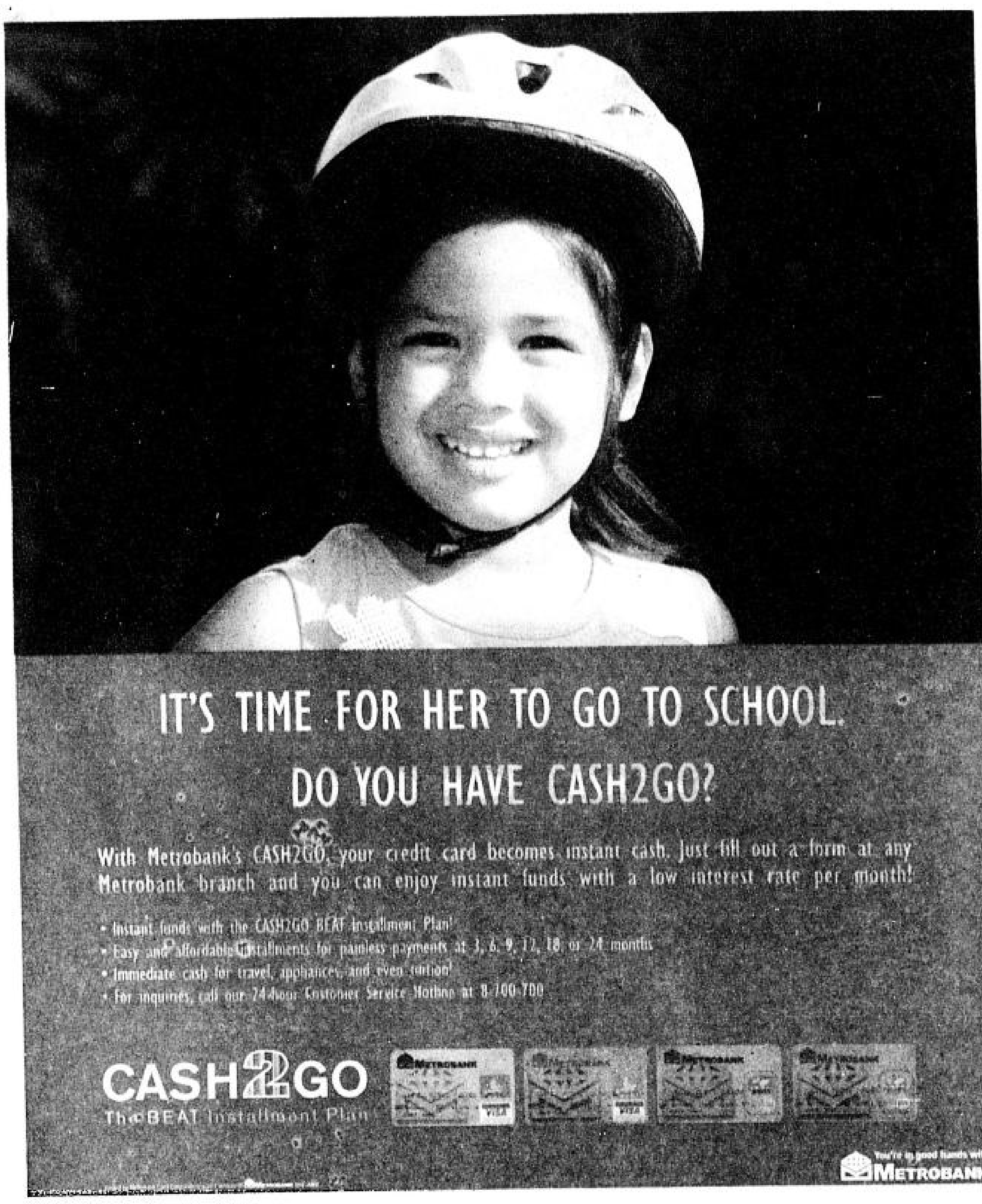

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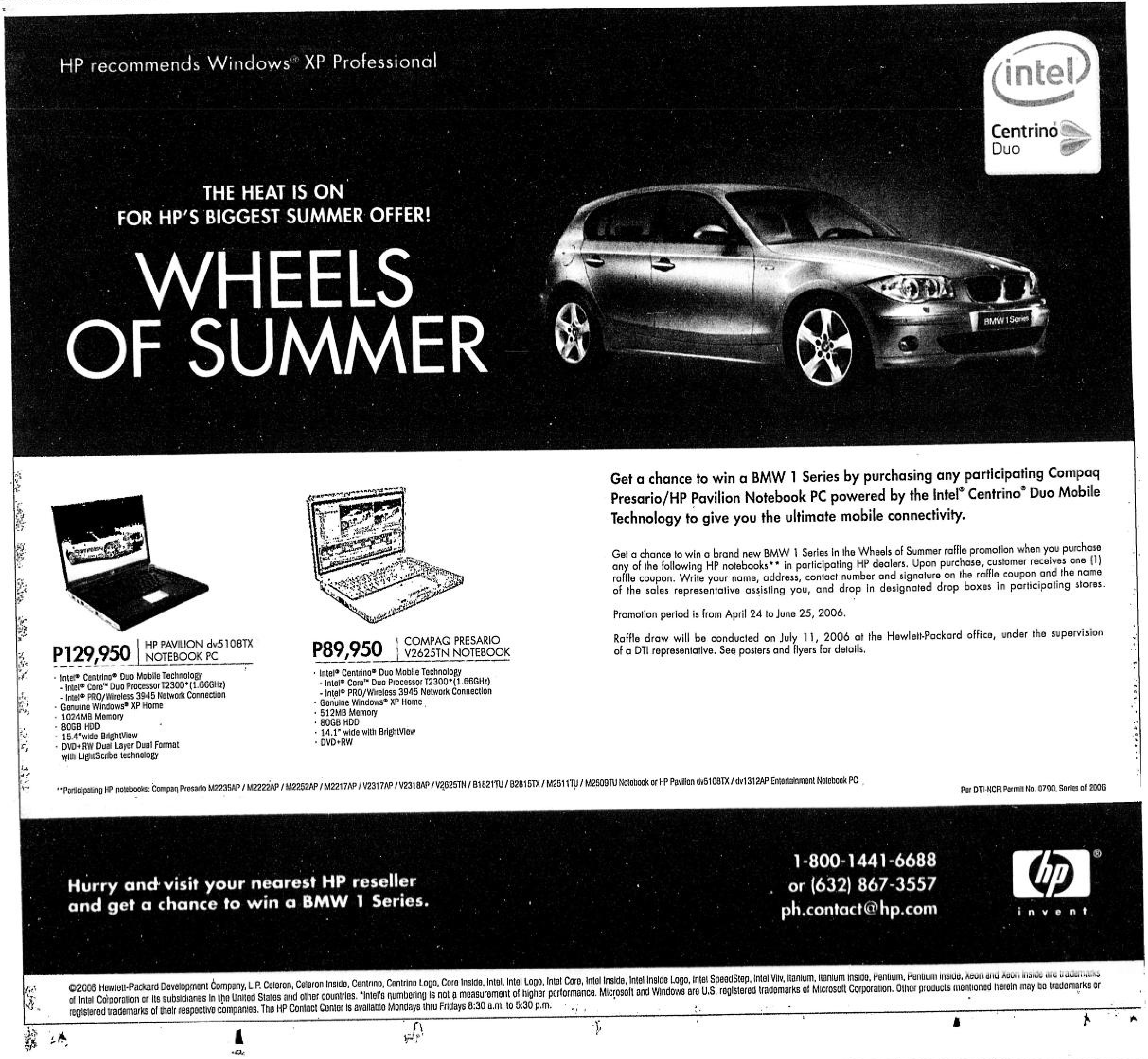

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